This Newsletter is to share useful information and articles so that we can work together to improve Southend's private rental sector and work more closely with all our partners. If you would like to write or suggest a topic for a future article or have some interesting story or information to share please contact Victoria Routledge, email landlordsforum@southend.gov.uk

Your personal Invitation to the Southend's Landlord Forum

Landlord Forum
On Thursday 24th September 2009
The Members Conference Room, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, SOS.
4pm Welcome: Registration and Coffee
4.30pm A short introduction by Cllr Mark Flewitt
Guest Speaker: Derek Leach. Eastern Landlords Association’s
“Advice on Surviving the Credit Crunch”
David Flynn & Daniel Turner:
“How Housing Benefit - A Business Opportunity”
Sian James a short presentation on
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R.S.V.P. preferably by E-Mail to landlordsforum@southend.gov.uk or 01702 215002 ext. 5815 ASAP

New for 2010 - Landlord Accreditation
Southend Borough Council is the lead Authority in the forthcoming Thames Gateway South Essex Regional Landlord Accreditation Project.

Look out for details in the next issue to find out how you can become an Accredited Landlord and enjoy the benefits that accreditation brings.

You could even accredit your properties and work towards a BRONZE SILVER or GOLD standard property rating!
When is a Shared House a House in Multiple Occupation???

When there are 3 or more individual persons who do not form a family renting a bedroom, sharing the kitchen and bathroom facilities within the house or flat.

Shared houses have become the norm for students, young professional, nurses and groups of EU residents to rent BUT under the Housing Act 2004 once 3 non-related people share a house this will classify it as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

This change came about with the introduction of the Housing Act 2004. The full definition of a HMO can be found within the Housing Act 2004 s. 254.

If you have in the past:

a) issued one tenancy agreement to a collective group of people living in the property,
b) lived in the property and rent out 2 or more bedrooms,
c) had a mix of self contained flat-lets/studios and bedrooms with a shared kitchen and bathroom within the house,

then you are now operating an HMO.

So what does this mean to you?

There are a set of regulations which apply to you. The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 372) place a duty on YOU to manage the supply of gas, electric, water, drainage and waste disposal; to ensure the common areas are safe and sound including any gardens and yards, ensure there is suitable means of escape from fire and fire devices e.g. mains linked smoke detectors, and ensure all fixtures and fittings are safe within the lettable room. A copy of this can be downloaded from www.opsi.gov.uk.

If your property is being rented out as a HMO then please contact us.

If your property is a 2 storey house; a maisonette on the ground and first floor; or a flat then contact Stan Tite on 01702 215002 ext 5830.

If your property is a 3 storey house, has a converted attic or basements; is a maisonette on the first and second floors, then contact Clare Sheridan on 01702 215002 ext 5818 or Sarah Scotchmer on 01702 215002 ext 5412. Your property may require a property licence which can be discussed further with the above Officers.
How long do you think it takes to process a claim for Housing Benefit?

- 1 month?
- 1 week?
- How does 1 day sound?

Introducing Fast Tracking

If an application is provided with the 7 essential items that make the application complete, the claim will be processed and a decision made within 1 working day!

Just ensure your tenant provides the following:

1. Fully completed claim form
2. Proof of identity for claimant, and for partner (if applicable)
3. Proof of National Insurance Number, and partners (if applicable)
4. Proof of all income and proof of partner’s income (if applicable)
5. Proof of income for anyone else residing in the home
6. Proof of all bank accounts, savings, investments and capital
7. Proof of rent

The Fast Tracking service immediately had a positive impact upon our processing times and over the last two years Fast Track claims have become a sizeable chunk of the claims that we process.

We have now started to advertise this already popular service throughout the borough.

Looking for advice about benefits?

Our website has recently been updated and contains the answers to many questions about Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

Check out the Landlords section of the website for information on claiming benefits aimed specifically at helping landlords with their tenants.

View the latest LHA rates online. www.southend.gov.uk If you have any comments regarding the benefits section of the website please e-mail benefits@southend.gov.uk

“Working Together to Have your Say”
Domestic Gas Health and Safety (Sandra Wilson, August 2009)

In 2005/06 16 people died from Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which had not been properly installed or maintained.

Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You MUST keep a record of these safety checks and you MUST issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to DEATH if the concentration level is high enough.

Recognising the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide:

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a SILENT KILLER. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

Spotting the Signs of Carbon Monoxide

You can tell if a gas appliance is working correctly by looking at the flame. If it is bright BLUE it is healthy. If it is YELLOW or ORANGE there is evidence of a possible Carbon Monoxide presence.

Other signs to look for include brownish-yellow stains around the appliance, pilot lights that frequently blow out and condensation in the room where the appliance is installed.

Your tenant’s are at risk of Carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your appliance is poorly installed
- Your appliance is not working properly
- Your appliance has not been safety checked & serviced regularly
- There is not enough fresh air in the room
- Your chimney flue is blocked
- YOU ALLOW ILLEGAL GAS WORKERS TO INSTALL OR MAINTAIN YOUR APPLIANCES
GAS SAFE REGISTERED INSTALLERS

You MUST have your gas appliances safety-checked by a GAS SAFE registered installer every year.

GAS SAFE registered installers are gas experts and have undergone extensive training to qualify for registration. BUT REMEMBER, GAS SAFE registration does not automatically cover all areas of gas work. Most installers specialise in one area, so check that your installer is qualified to carry out the work you are asking them to do.

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DO YOUR TENANT’S KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND IF THEY SMELL GAS?

It is good practice to provide emergency information to your tenants – do you include this in your tenancy pack?

The type of information you should consider providing is this:

If you smell gas then call: 0800 111 999 (England, Scotland and Wales)

• If you are calling from a mobile phone then GO OUTSIDE FIRST

• Do NOT smoke

• Do NOT turn light switches on

• Do NOT do anything to create a spark

If you do NOT need to switch on a light to do so:

• Turn off the supply at the meter &

• Open doors and windows and wait outside for the emergency engineer to arrive

Anyone who appears to be suffering from the effects of gas inhalation must be removed from the contaminated area, placed in the open air and given oxygen if available. Keep them rested and avoid exertion.

WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

Contact details for The Health and Safety Executive will be provided to any tenant requesting assistance in dealing with disrepair to gas appliances which are the responsibility of the landlord.

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Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

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What is the Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme?

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Who can apply?

Anyone homeless or threatened with homelessness who can show that they would not be able to secure a rented home without financial help and are found eligible for assistance by the council’s Housing Options Team. The loans relate to Assured Shorthold Tenancies of at least twelve months. In cases where single applicants are under the age of 25, we may consider applications involving renting from a resident landlord (lodgings), but this will be done on a case by case basis.

How does it work for Landlords?

• A Private Sector Tenancy Officer will visit your property and carry out a simple inspection. Photographs will be taken at that time.
• Rental potential, monthly rental and payment options will be discussed.
• Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
• Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
• Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
• Upon receipt of the cheque the landlord will grant a 12-month tenancy.

Notes:

• All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
• We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
• A current Gas Safety Certificate is required and this will need to be updated on an annual basis.
• A visual pre-tenancy electrical safety inspection is required and a full electrical test commissioned where necessary (it is recommended to carry out a periodic electrical test every 5 years)
• Property to have suitably sited smoke detector(s) one to each floor.
• If more convenient, we would suggest that the landlord take out a basic service contract with a service company such as British Gas, thus ensuring that inspections, services, call-outs are automatically covered.
• A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required.
• The landlord is responsible for Building Insurance & the tenant responsible for Contents Insurance.
• Prior to the tenant moving in, the landlord should take meter readings & advise utilities of change of name. For ease of transition, a list should be provided giving names, addresses & contact numbers of those utility companies. If key meters are fitted, then keys to be available on move-in day.
• Unless otherwise indicated on the Tenancy Agreement, the tenant is responsible for all utility bills, Council Tax, water rates, TV licence, et cetera.
It is important to ensure that all electrical appliances and fittings within the rented property are safe and in good working order. Unlike gas regulations, there is no law that says you must have a landlord electrical safety certificate. But, should any electrical fittings or appliances within your rental property cause harm to a tenant you could be held liable under the landlord’s ‘duty of care’.Basically a portable appliance is anything with a plug that fits into a 13amp socket. The obvious things to look for are frayed wires, scorched plug tops, cracked plugs or sockets and most importantly correct fuses. The tenant could sue you for damages, or worse you may be brought before a court for negligence under the regulations.

We recommend landlords carry out the following:

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- Periodic inspections of electrical equipment by a qualified electrician.
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Size of Fuses?

If no-one can remember schoolboy physics to find the correct fuse divide the wattage of the appliance by 240.e.g. 3000 watt kettle equals 3000 ÷ 240 = 12.5 amps.

Fuses come in 3, 5 and 13amps and it is quite dangerous to have a higher rated fuse than necessary. The following is a guide on fuse sizes required depending on the power of the appliance in Watts.

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Nothing will stop tenants putting in wrong fuses so a check before each let would be sensible.

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“Working Together to Have your Say”
The Thames Gateway South Essex PLACE Scheme

Do you have a property that has been empty for some time? Would you like it repaired, renovated and let?

Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Councils are collaborating as part of the Thames Gateway PLACE Scheme in conjunction with Pathmeads Housing Association to bring empty homes back into use.

The scheme is designed to assist owners in bringing empty properties back into use. The Loan is for a maximum of £20,000. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council are particularly interested in 2 to 3 bedroom properties.

The scheme is a partnership between you the owner, Southend on Sea Borough Council and Pathmeads who will manage and maintain your home.

As a condition we will only accept properties that the owner is prepared to let at no more than the weekly local housing allowance level.

In Southend-on-Sea this is approximately £115.38 per week for a one-bedroom property, £150.00 per week for a two-bedroom property and £230.77 per week for a four-bedroom property. The up to date figures are available on the Council’s web site at: www.southend.gov.uk and type local housing allowance into the search field.

If you are interested in the scheme Pathmeads will inspect the property and tell you how much it will cost to renovate. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will fund the renovation costs based on the works conducted by Pathmeads. We would be looking for a five-year lease agreement with you. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will confirm the rent level that is acceptable. Once the lease is signed between all parties work will commence.

When ready to let Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will refer a tenant to occupy the property. No interest is charged on the loan. Pathmeads act as the landlord and will charge a management and maintenance fee as part of the rent. At the end of the lease the property will be returned to you ready to let, sell or occupy yourself.

If you would like more information on the scheme itself then please contact Stuart Burrell:

Southend Borough Council’s Empty Homes Officer on 01702 215002 ext 4363

Email emptyprop@southend.gov.uk

If you would more information on Pathmeads then please contact:

Hasmita Bhojani on 020 8900 4722

Email landlords@pathmeads.org.uk or visit their website at www.pathmeads.org.uk

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Future Issues:
Accreditation
HHSRS: Damp & Mould
Energy Efficiency
What is a PCB?
“Ask the Agent”
“On the Horizon”
Sanctuary Scheme
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“Working Together to Have your Say”
The Thames Gateway South Essex PLACE Scheme

Do you have a property that has been empty for some time? Would you like it repaired, renovated and let?

Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Councils are collaborating as part of the Thames Gateway PLACE Scheme in conjunction with Pathmeads Housing Association to bring empty homes back into use.

The scheme is designed to assist owners in bringing empty properties back into use. The Loan is for a maximum of £20,000. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council are particularly interested in 2 to 3 bedroom properties.

The scheme is a partnership between you the owner, Southend on Sea Borough Council and Pathmeads who will manage and maintain your home.

As a condition we will only accept properties that the owner is prepared to let at no more than the weekly local housing allowance level.

In Southend-on-Sea this is approximately £115.38 per week for a one-bedroom property, £150.00 per week for a two-bedroom property and £230.77 per week for a four-bedroom property. The up to date figures are available on the Council’s web site at: www.southend.gov.uk and type local housing allowance into the search field.

If you are interested in the scheme Pathmeads will inspect the property and tell you how much it will cost to renovate. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will fund the renovation costs based on the works conducted by Pathmeads. We would be looking for a five-year lease agreement with you. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will confirm the rent level that is acceptable. Once the lease is signed between all parties work will commence.

When ready to let Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will refer a tenant to occupy the property. No interest is charged on the loan. Pathmeads act as the landlord and will charge a management and maintenance fee as part of the rent. At the end of the lease the property will be returned to you ready to let, sell or occupy yourself.

If you would like more information on the scheme itself then please contact Stuart Burrell:

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Email emptyprop@southend.gov.uk

If you would more information on Pathmeads then please contact:

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Your personal Invitation to the Southend’s Landlord Forum

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On Thursday 24th September 2009
The Members Conference Room, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, SOS.
4pm Welcome: Registration and Coffee
4.30pm A short introduction by Cllr Mark Flewitt
Guest Speaker: Derek Leach. Eastern Landlords Association’s
“Advice on Surviving the Credit Crunch”
David Flynn & Daniel Turner:
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Sian James a short presentation on
“The New Online Claim Form”
R.S.V.P. preferably by E-Mail to landlordsforum@southend.gov.uk
or 01702 215002 ext. 5815 ASAP

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Southend Borough Council is the lead Authority in the forthcoming Thames Gateway South Essex Regional Landlord Accreditation Project.

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You could even accredit your properties and work towards a BRONZE SILVER or GOLD standard property rating!

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When is a Shared House a House in Multiple Occupation???

When there are 3 or more individual persons who do not form a family renting a bedroom, sharing the kitchen and bathroom facilities within the house or flat.

Shared houses have become the norm for students, young professional, nurses and groups of EU residents to rent BUT under the Housing Act 2004 once 3 non-related people share a house this will classify it as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

This change came about with the introduction of the Housing Act 2004. The full definition of a HMO can be found within the Housing Act 2004 s. 254.

If you have in the past:

- a) issued one tenancy agreement to a collective group of people living in the property,
- b) lived in the property and rent out 2 or more bedrooms,
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then you are now operating an HMO.

So what does this mean to you?

There are a set of regulations which apply to you. The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 372) place a duty on YOU to manage the supply of gas, electric, water, drainage and waste disposal; to ensure the common areas are safe and sound including any gardens and yards, ensure there is suitable means of escape from fire and fire devices e.g. mains linked smoke detectors, and ensure all fixtures and fittings are safe within the lettable room. A copy of this can be downloaded from www.opsi.gov.uk.

If your property is being rented out as a HMO then please contact us.

If your property is a 2 storey house; a maisonette on the ground and first floor; or a flat then contact Stan Tite on 01702 215002 ext 5830.

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How long do you think it takes to process a claim for Housing Benefit?

1 month?

1 week?

How does 1 day sound?

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If an application is provided with the 7 essential items that make the application complete, the claim will be processed and a decision made within 1 working day!

Just ensure your tenant provides the following:

1. Fully completed claim form
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3. Proof of National Insurance Number, and partners (if applicable)
4. Proof of all income and proof of partner’s income (if applicable)
5. Proof of income for anyone else residing in the home
6. Proof of all bank accounts, savings, investments and capital
7. Proof of rent

The Fast Tracking service immediately had a positive impact upon our processing times and over the last two years Fast Track claims have become a sizeable chunk of the claims that we process.

We have now started to advertise this already popular service throughout the borough.

Looking for advice about benefits?

Our website has recently been updated and contains the answers to many questions about Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

Check out the Landlords section of the website for information on claiming benefits aimed specifically at helping landlords with their tenants.

View the latest LHA rates online. [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk) If you have any comments regarding the benefits section of the website please e-mail benefits@southend.gov.uk

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In 2005/06 16 people died from Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which had not been properly installed or maintained.

Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

**SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES**

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You **MUST** keep a record of these safety checks and you **MUST** issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to **DEATH** if the concentration level is high enough.

**Recognising the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide:**

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a **SILENT KILLER**. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

**Spotting the Signs of Carbon Monoxide**

You can tell if a gas appliance is working correctly by looking at the flame. If it is bright **BLUE** it is healthy. If it is **YELLOW** or **ORANGE** there is evidence of a possible Carbon Monoxide presence.

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Your tenant’s are at risk of Carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your appliance is poorly installed
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- Your appliance has not been safety checked & serviced regularly
- There is not enough fresh air in the room
- Your chimney flue is blocked
- **YOU ALLOW ILLEGAL GAS WORKERS TO INSTALL OR MAINTAIN YOUR APPLIANCES**
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Make sure any alarms you buy conform to current British and European safety standards. ‘CE’ and ‘BS’ safety symbols will be clearly displayed on the packaging.

NEVER BUY AN ALARM THAT DOESN’T CARRY THE ‘CE’ OR ‘BS’ SAFETY MARK

ALWAYS CHOOSE AN AUDIBLE ALARM SO TENANTS CAN BE ALERTED EVEN IF ASLEEP.

DO YOUR TENANT’S KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND IF THEY SMELL GAS?

It is good practice to provide emergency information to your tenants – do you include this in your tenancy pack?

The type of information you should consider providing is this:

If you smell gas then call: 0800 111 999 (England, Scotland and Wales)

• If you are calling from a mobile phone then GO OUTSIDE FIRST

• Do NOT smoke

• Do NOT turn light switches on

• Do NOT do anything to create a spark

If you do NOT need to switch on a light to do so:

• Turn off the supply at the meter &

• Open doors and windows and wait outside for the emergency engineer to arrive

Anyone who appears to be suffering from the effects of gas inhalation must be removed from the contaminated area, placed in the open air and given oxygen if available. Keep them rested and avoid exertion.

WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

Contact details for The Health and Safety Executive will be provided to any tenant requesting assistance in dealing with disrepair to gas appliances which are the responsibility of the landlord.

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Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

Below you will find a draft copy that we intend to include and would appreciate you spending a couple of moments reading this through in order to identify whether or not we have addressed all of the questions you may have. If we’ve missed anything or you have any other comments to make, we would welcome your input by contacting The Private Sector Tenancy Officer:

Chris Horsley, on 01702 215002 ext 4319 or e-mail to chrishorsley@southend.gov.uk.

A GUIDE TO RENT AND DEPOSIT LOAN SCHEME (LANDLORDS)

What is the Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme?

It is a scheme set up by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is aimed at people who need to rent a home in the private sector but are unable to raise the funds needed to cover the rent in advance and damage deposit normally asked for by private landlords. The loan is interest free and is paid back by affordable monthly repayments which we agree with each individual.

Who can apply?

Anyone homeless or threatened with homelessness who can show that they would not be able to secure a rented home without financial help and are found eligible for assistance by the council’s Housing Options Team. The loans relate to Assured Shorthold Tenancies of at least twelve months. In cases where single applicants are under the age of 25, we may consider applications involving renting from a resident landlord (lodgings), but this will be done on a case by case basis.

How does it work for Landlords?

• A Private Sector Tenancy Officer will visit your property and carry out a simple inspection. Photographs will be taken at that time.
• Rental potential, monthly rental and payment options will be discussed.
• Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
• Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
• Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
• Upon receipt of the cheque the landlord will grant a 12-month tenancy.

Notes:

• All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
• We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
• A current Gas Safety Certificate is required and this will need to be updated on an annual basis.
• A visual pre-tenancy electrical safety inspection is required and a full electrical test commissioned where necessary (it is recommended to carry out a periodic electrical test every 5 years)
• Property to have suitably sited smoke detector(s) one to each floor.
• If more convenient, we would suggest that the landlord take out a basic service contract with a service company such as British Gas, thus ensuring that inspections, services, call-outs are automatically covered.
• A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required.
• The landlord is responsible for Building Insurance & the tenant responsible for Contents Insurance.
• Prior to the tenant moving in, the landlord should take meter readings & advise utilities of change of name. For ease of transition, a list should be provided giving names, addresses & contact numbers of those utility companies. If key meters are fitted, then keys to be available on move-in day.
• Unless otherwise indicated on the Tenancy Agreement, the tenant is responsible for all utility bills, Council Tax, water rates, TV licence, et cetera.
Electrical issues and appliances
(Courtesy of the Eastern Landlords Association News Issue 1, 2009)

It is important to ensure that all electrical appliances and fittings within the rented property are safe and in good working order. Unlike gas regulations, there is no law that says you must have a landlord electrical safety certificate. But, should any electrical fittings or appliances within your rental property cause harm to a tenant you could be held liable under the landlord’s ‘duty of care’. Basically a portable appliance is anything with a plug that fits into a 13amp socket. The obvious things to look for are frayed wires, scorched plug tops, cracked plugs or sockets and most importantly correct fuses. The tenant could sue you for damages, or worse you may be brought before a court for negligence under the regulations.

We recommend landlords carry out the following:

- Annual visual inspections by the landlord or agent - recording this on a safety checklist,
- Inspections on tenant change-overs, recording electrical equipment, its condition and fuses fitted
- Periodic inspections of electrical equipment by a qualified electrician.
- 5 yearly inspections by a qualified electrician to ensure safety and that the electrical system complies with current electrical regulations.
- Keep all records of these inspections.

Size of Fuses?

If no-one can remember schoolboy physics to find the correct fuse divide the wattage of the appliance by 240. e.g. 3000 watt kettle equals 3000 ÷ 240 = 12.5 amps.

Fuses come in 3, 5 and 13amps and it is quite dangerous to have a higher rated fuse than necessary. The following is a guide on fuse sizes required depending on the power of the appliance in Watts.

- Use a 3amp fuse in plugs attached to appliances up to 700 Watts
- Use a 5amp fuse in plugs attached to appliances from 700 to 1200 Watts
- Use a 13amp fuse in plugs attached to appliances from 1200 to 3000 Watts

Nothing will stop tenants putting in wrong fuses so a check before each let would be sensible.

I think it would be a long time before it becomes mandatory for the simple reason that most lets are ‘unfurnished’ with a minimum of appliances and there would be more risk involved in the tenants own appliances than anything supplied by landlords.

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Domestic Gas Health and Safety (Sandra Wilson, August 2009)

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• Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
• Upon receipt of the cheque the landlord will grant a 12-month tenancy.

Notes:
• All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
• We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
• A current Gas Safety Certificate is required and this will need to be updated on an annual basis.
• A visual pre-tenancy electrical safety inspection is required and a full electrical test commissioned where necessary (it is recommended to carry out a periodic electrical test every 5 years)
• Property to have suitably sited smoke detector(s) one to each floor.
• If more convenient, we would suggest that the landlord take out a basic service contract with a service company such as British Gas, thus ensuring that inspections, services, call-outs are automatically covered.
• A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required.
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• Unless otherwise indicated on the Tenancy Agreement, the tenant is responsible for all utility bills, Council Tax, water rates, TV licence, etcetera.
Electrical issues and appliances
(Courtesy of the Eastern Landlords Association News Issue 1, 2009)

It is important to ensure that all electrical appliances and fittings within the rented property are safe and in good working order. Unlike gas regulations, there is no law that says you must have a landlord electrical safety certificate. But, should any electrical fittings or appliances within your rental property cause harm to a tenant you could be held liable under the landlord’s ‘duty of care’. Basically a portable appliance is anything with a plug that fits into a 13amp socket. The obvious things to look for are frayed wires, scorched plug tops, cracked plugs or sockets and most importantly correct fuses. The tenant could sue you for damages, or worse you may be brought before a court for negligence under the regulations.

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Size of Fuses?

If no-one can remember schoolboy physics to find the correct fuse divide the wattage of the appliance by 240. e.g. 3000 watt kettle equals 3000 ÷ 240 = 12.5 amps.

Fuses come in 3, 5 and 13amps and it is quite dangerous to have a higher rated fuse than necessary. The following is a guide on fuse sizes required depending on the power of the appliance in Watts.

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If you would like more information on the scheme itself then please contact Stuart Burrell:

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Landlord Forum
On Thursday 24th September 2009
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4pm Welcome: Registration and Coffee
4.30pm A short introduction by Cllr Mark Flewitt
Guest Speaker: Derek Leach. Eastern Landlords Association’s
“Advice on Surviving the Credit Crunch”
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Sian James a short presentation on
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R.S.V.P. preferably by E-Mail to landlordsforum@southend.gov.uk
or 01702 215002 ext. 5815 ASAP

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Southend Borough Council is the lead Authority in the forthcoming Thames Gateway South Essex Regional Landlord Accreditation Project.

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You could even accredit your properties and work towards a BRONZE SILVER or GOLD standard property rating!

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When there are 3 or more individual persons who do not form a family renting a bedroom, sharing the kitchen and bathroom facilities within the house or flat.

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This change came about with the introduction of the Housing Act 2004. The full definition of a HMO can be found within the Housing Act 2004 s. 254.

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then you are now operating an HMO.

So what does this mean to you?

There are a set of regulations which apply to you. The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 372) place a duty on YOU to manage the supply of gas, electric, water, drainage and waste disposal; to ensure the common areas are safe and sound including any gardens and yards, ensure there is suitable means of escape from fire and fire devices e.g. mains linked smoke detectors, and ensure all fixtures and fittings are safe within the letable room. A copy of this can be downloaded from www.opsi.gov.uk.

If your property is being rented out as a HMO then please contact us.

If your property is a 2 storey house; a maisonette on the ground and first floor; or a flat then contact Stan Tite on 01702 215002 ext 5830.

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How long do you think it takes to process a claim for Housing Benefit?

1 month?

1 week?

How does 1 day sound?

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If an application is provided with the 7 essential items that make the application complete, the claim will be processed and a decision made within 1 working day!

Just ensure your tenant provides the following:

1. Fully completed claim form
2. Proof of identity for claimant, and for partner (if applicable)
3. Proof of National Insurance Number, and partners (if applicable)
4. Proof of all income and proof of partner’s income (if applicable)
5. Proof of income for anyone else residing in the home
6. Proof of all bank accounts, savings, investments and capital
7. Proof of rent

The Fast Tracking service immediately had a positive impact upon our processing times and over the last two years Fast Track claims have become a sizeable chunk of the claims that we process.

We have now started to advertise this already popular service throughout the borough.

Looking for advice about benefits?

Our website has recently been updated and contains the answers to many questions about Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

Check out the Landlords section of the website for information on claiming benefits aimed specifically at helping landlords with their tenants.

View the latest LHA rates online. www.southend.gov.uk If you have any comments regarding the benefits section of the website please e-mail benefits@southend.gov.uk

“Working Together to Have your Say”
Domestic Gas Health and Safety (Sandra Wilson, August 2009)

In 2005/06 16 people died from Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which had not been properly installed or maintained.

Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You MUST keep a record of these safety checks and you MUST issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to DEATH if the concentration level is high enough.

Recognising the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide:

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a SILENT KILLER. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

Spotting the Signs of Carbon Monoxide

You can tell if a gas appliance is working correctly by looking at the flame. If it is bright BLUE it is healthy. If it is YELLOW or ORANGE there is evidence of a possible Carbon Monoxide presence.

Other signs to look for include brownish-yellow stains around the appliance, pilot lights that frequently blow out and condensation in the room where the appliance is installed.

Your tenant’s are at risk of Carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your appliance is poorly installed
- Your appliance is not working properly
- Your appliance has not been safety checked & serviced regularly
- There is not enough fresh air in the room
- Your chimney flue is blocked
- YOU ALLOW ILLEGAL GAS WORKERS TO INSTALL OR MAINTAIN YOUR APPLIANCES
GAS SAFE REGISTERED INSTALLERS

You **MUST** have your gas appliances safety-checked by a GAS SAFE registered installer every year.

GAS SAFE registered installers are gas experts and have undergone extensive training to qualify for registration. **BUT REMEMBER,** GAS SAFE registration does not automatically cover all areas of gas work. Most installers specialise in one area, so check that your installer is qualified to carry out the work you are asking them to do.

You can **CHECK YOUR INSTALLERS STATUS** with the GAS SAFE Customer Services Team (0800 408 5500) or you can look on the reverse of the installer’s GAS SAFE ID card.

**NEVER** allow anyone without a valid GAS SAFE registration number to work on your gas appliances.

**AUDIBLE CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS**

Apart from having your gas appliances safety checked annually, the next best thing you can do is fit a CE-approved audible carbon monoxide alarm. Typically, these cost around £25.00 which is a small price to pay if it saves a life.

Make sure any alarms you buy conform to current British and European safety standards. ‘CE’ and ‘BS’ safety symbols will be clearly displayed on the packaging.

**NEVER BUY AN ALARM THAT DOESN’T CARRY THE ‘CE’ OR ‘BS’ SAFETY MARK**

**ALWAYS CHOOSE AN AUDIBLE ALARM SO TENANTS CAN BE ALERTED EVEN IF ASLEEP.**

**DO YOUR TENANT’S KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND IF THEY SMELL GAS?**

It is good practice to provide emergency information to your tenants – do you include this in your tenancy pack?

The type of information you should consider providing is this:

- **If you smell gas then call:** 0800 111 999 (England, Scotland and Wales)
  - If you are calling from a mobile phone then **GO OUTSIDE FIRST**
  - **Do NOT** smoke
  - **Do NOT** turn light switches on
  - **Do NOT** do anything to create a spark

- **If you do NOT need to switch on a light to do so:**
  - **Turn off** the supply at the meter &
  - **Open** doors and windows and wait outside for the emergency engineer to arrive

Anyone who appears to be suffering from the effects of gas inhalation must be removed from the contaminated area, placed in the open air and given oxygen if available. Keep them rested and avoid exertion.

**WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?**

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

Contact details for The Health and Safety Executive will be provided to any tenant requesting assistance in dealing with disrepair to gas appliances which are the responsibility of the landlord.

“Working Together to Have your Say”
Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

Below you will find a draft copy that we intend to include and would appreciate you spending a couple of moments reading this through in order to identify whether or not we have addressed all of the questions you may have. If we’ve missed anything or you have any other comments to make, we would welcome your input by contacting The Private Sector Tenancy Officer:

Chris Horsley, on 01702 215002 ext 4319 or e-mail to chrishorsley@southend.gov.uk.

A GUIDE TO RENT AND DEPOSIT LOAN SCHEME (LANDLORDS)

What is the Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme?
It is a scheme set up by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is aimed at people who need to rent a home in the private sector but are unable to raise the funds needed to cover the rent in advance and damage deposit normally asked for by private landlords. The loan is interest free and is paid back by affordable monthly repayments which we agree with each individual.

Who can apply?
Anyone homeless or threatened with homelessness who can show that they would not be able to secure a rented home without financial help and are found eligible for assistance by the council’s Housing Options Team. The loans relate to Assured Shorthold Tenancies of at least twelve months. In cases where single applicants are under the age of 25, we may consider applications involving renting from a resident landlord (lodgings), but this will be done on a case by case basis.

How does it work for Landlords?
• A Private Sector Tenancy Officer will visit your property and carry out a simple inspection. Photographs will be taken at that time.
• Rental potential, monthly rental and payment options will be discussed.
• Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
• Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
• Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
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Notes:
• All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
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Make sure any alarms you buy conform to current British and European safety standards. ‘CE’ and ‘BS’ safety symbols will be clearly displayed on the packaging.

**NEVER BUY AN ALARM THAT DOESN’T CARRY THE ‘CE’ OR ‘BS’ SAFETY MARK**

**ALWAYS CHOOSE AN AUDIBLE ALARM SO TENANTS CAN BE ALERTED EVEN IF ASLEEP.**

**DO YOUR TENANT’S KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND IF THEY SMELL GAS?**

It is good practice to provide emergency information to your tenants – do you include this in your tenancy pack?

The type of information you should consider providing is this:

**If you smell gas then call: 0800 111 999 (England, Scotland and Wales)**

- If you are calling from a mobile phone then **GO OUTSIDE FIRST**
- **Do NOT** smoke
- **Do NOT** turn light switches on
- **Do NOT do anything to create a spark**

If you do **NOT** need to switch on a light to do so:

- **Turn off** the supply at the meter &
- **Open** doors and windows and wait outside for the emergency engineer to arrive

Anyone who appears to be suffering from the effects of gas inhalation must be removed from the contaminated area, placed in the open air and given oxygen if available. Keep them rested and avoid exertion.

**WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?**

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

Contact details for The Health and Safety Executive will be provided to any tenant requesting assistance in dealing with disrepair to gas appliances which are the responsibility of the landlord.

“**Working Together to Have your Say**”
Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

Below you will find a draft copy that we intend to include and would appreciate you spending a couple of moments reading this through in order to identify whether or not we have addressed all of the questions you may have. If we’ve missed anything or you have any other comments to make, we would welcome your input by contacting The Private Sector Tenancy Officer:

Chris Horsley, on 01702 215002 ext 4319 or e-mail to chrishorsley@southend.gov.uk.

A GUIDE TO RENT AND DEPOSIT LOAN SCHEME (LANDLORDS)

What is the Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme?

It is a scheme set up by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is aimed at people who need to rent a home in the private sector but are unable to raise the funds needed to cover the rent in advance and damage deposit normally asked for by private landlords. The loan is interest free and is paid back by affordable monthly repayments which we agree with each individual.

Who can apply?

Anyone homeless or threatened with homelessness who can show that they would not be able to secure a rented home without financial help and are found eligible for assistance by the council’s Housing Options Team. The loans relate to Assured Shorthold Tenancies of at least twelve months. In cases where single applicants are under the age of 25, we may consider applications involving renting from a resident landlord (lodgings), but this will be done on a case by case basis.

How does it work for Landlords?

- A Private Sector Tenancy Officer will visit your property and carry out a simple inspection. Photographs will be taken at that time.
- Rental potential, monthly rental and payment options will be discussed.
- Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
- Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
- Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
- Upon receipt of the cheque the landlord will grant a 12-month tenancy.

Notes:

- All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
- We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
- A current Gas Safety Certificate is required and this will need to be updated on an annual basis.
- A visual pre-tenancy electrical safety inspection is required and a full electrical test commissioned where necessary (it is recommended to carry out a periodic electrical test every 5 years)
- Property to have suitably sited smoke detector(s) one to each floor.
- If more convenient, we would suggest that the landlord take out a basic service contract with a service company such as British Gas, thus ensuring that inspections, services, call-outs are automatically covered.
- A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required.
- The landlord is responsible for Building Insurance & the tenant responsible for Contents Insurance.
- Prior to the tenant moving in, the landlord should take meter readings & advise utilities of change of name. For ease of transition, a list should be provided giving names, addresses & contact numbers of those utility companies. If key meters are fitted, then keys to be available on move-in day.
- Unless otherwise indicated on the Tenancy Agreement, the tenant is responsible for all utility bills, Council Tax, water rates, TV licence, etcetera.
Electrical issues and appliances
(Courtesy of the Eastern Landlords Association News Issue 1, 2009)

It is important to ensure that all electrical appliances and fittings within the rented property are safe and in good working order. Unlike gas regulations, there is no law that says you must have a landlord electrical safety certificate. But, should any electrical fittings or appliances within your rental property cause harm to a tenant you could be held liable under the landlord’s ‘duty of care’. Basically a portable appliance is anything with a plug that fits into a 13amp socket. The obvious things to look for are frayed wires, scorched plug tops, cracked plugs or sockets and most importantly correct fuses. The tenant could sue you for damages, or worse you may be brought before a court for negligence under the regulations.

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**On Thursday 24th September 2009**

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4pm Welcome: Registration and Coffee

4.30pm A short introduction by Cllr Mark Flewitt

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“Advice on Surviving the Credit Crunch”

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You could even accredit your properties and work towards a **BRONZE SILVER** or **GOLD** standard property rating!

**Future Issues:**

- Accreditation
- HHSRS: Damp & Mould
- Energy Efficiency
- What is a PCB?
- “Ask the Agent”
- “On the Horizon”
- Sanctuary Scheme
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View the latest LHA rates online. www.southend.gov.uk If you have any comments regarding the benefits section of the website please e-mail benefits@southend.gov.uk

“Working Together to Have your Say”
Domestic Gas Health and Safety *(Sandra Wilson, August 2009)*

In 2005/06 16 people died from Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which had not been properly installed or maintained.

Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

**SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES**

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You MUST keep a record of these safety checks and you MUST issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

**Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.**

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to DEATH if the concentration level is high enough.

**Recognising the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide:**

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a **SILENT KILLER**. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

**Spotting the Signs of Carbon Monoxide**

You can tell if a gas appliance is working correctly by looking at the flame. If it is bright blue it is healthy. If it is yellow or orange there is evidence of a possible Carbon Monoxide presence.

Other signs to look for include brownish-yellow stains around the appliance, pilot lights that frequently blow out and condensation in the room where the appliance is installed.

**Your tenant’s are at risk of Carbon monoxide poisoning if:**

- Your appliance is poorly installed
- Your appliance is not working properly
- Your appliance has not been safety checked & serviced regularly
- There is not enough fresh air in the room
- Your chimney flue is blocked
- YOU ALLOW ILLEGAL GAS WORKERS TO INSTALL OR MAINTAIN YOUR APPLIANCES
GAS SAFE REGISTERED INSTALLERS

You **MUST** have your gas appliances safety-checked by a GAS SAFE registered installer every year.

GAS SAFE registered installers are gas experts and have undergone extensive training to qualify for registration. **BUT REMEMBER, GAS SAFE** registration does not automatically cover all areas of gas work. Most installers specialise in one area, so check that your installer is qualified to carry out the work you are asking them to do.

You can **CHECK YOUR INSTALLERS STATUS** with the GAS SAFE Customer Services Team (0800 408 5500) or you can look on the reverse of the installer’s GAS SAFE ID card. **NEVER** allow anyone without a valid GAS SAFE registration number to work on your gas appliances.

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Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You MUST keep a record of these safety checks and you MUST issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to DEATH if the concentration level is high enough.

Recognising the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide:

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a SILENT KILLER. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

Spotting the Signs of Carbon Monoxide

You can tell if a gas appliance is working correctly by looking at the flame. If it is bright BLUE it is healthy. If it is YELLOW or ORANGE there is evidence of a possible Carbon Monoxide presence.

Other signs to look for include brownish-yellow stains around the appliance, pilot lights that frequently blow out and condensation in the room where the appliance is installed.

Your tenant’s are at risk of Carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your appliance is poorly installed
- Your appliance is not working properly
- Your appliance has not been safety checked & serviced regularly
- There is not enough fresh air in the room
- Your chimney flue is blocked
- YOU ALLOW ILLEGAL GAS WORKERS TO INSTALL OR MAINTAIN YOUR APPLIANCES
**GAS SAFE REGISTERED INSTALLERS**

You **MUST** have your gas appliances safety-checked by a **GAS SAFE** registered installer every year.

**GAS SAFE** registered installers are gas experts and have undergone extensive training to qualify for registration. **BUT REMEMBER, GAS SAFE** registration does not automatically cover all areas of gas work. Most installers specialise in one area, so check that your installer is qualified to carry out the work you are asking them to do.

You can **CHECK YOUR INSTALLERS STATUS** with the **GAS SAFE** Customer Services Team (0800 408 5500) or you can look on the reverse of the installer’s **GAS SAFE** ID card.

**NEVER** allow anyone without a valid **GAS SAFE** registration number to work on your gas appliances.

**AUDIBLE CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS**

Apart from having your gas appliances safety-checked annually, the next best thing you can do is fit a CE-approved audible carbon monoxide alarm. Typically, these cost around £25.00 which is a small price to pay if it saves a life.

Make sure any alarms you buy conform to current British and European safety standards. ‘CE’ and ‘BS’ safety symbols will be clearly displayed on the packaging.

**NEVER BUY AN ALARM THAT DOESN’T CARRY THE ‘CE’ OR ‘BS’ SAFETY MARK**

**ALWAYS CHOOSE AN AUDIBLE ALARM SO TENANTS CAN BE ALERTED EVEN IF ASLEEP.**

**DO YOUR TENANT’S KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND IF THEY SMELL GAS?**

It is good practice to provide emergency information to your tenants – do you include this in your tenancy pack?

The type of information you should consider providing is this:

If you smell gas then call: **0800 111 999** (England, Scotland and Wales)

- If you are calling from a mobile phone then **GO OUTSIDE FIRST**
- **Do NOT** smoke
- **Do NOT** turn light switches on
- **Do NOT** do anything to create a spark

If you do **NOT** need to switch on a light to do so:

- **Turn off** the supply at the meter &
- **Open** doors and windows and wait outside for the emergency engineer to arrive

Anyone who appears to be suffering from the effects of gas inhalation must be removed from the contaminated area, placed in the open air and given oxygen if available. Keep them rested and avoid exertion.

**WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?**

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

Contact details for The Health and Safety Executive will be provided to any tenant requesting assistance in dealing with disrepair to gas appliances which are the responsibility of the landlord.

“**Working Together to Have your Say**”
Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

Below you will find a draft copy that we intend to include and would appreciate you spending a couple of moments reading this through in order to identify whether or not we have addressed all of the questions you may have. If we’ve missed anything or you have any other comments to make, we would welcome your input by contacting The Private Sector Tenancy Officer:

Chris Horsley, on 01702 215002 ext 4319 or e-mail to chrishorsley@southend.gov.uk.

A GUIDE TO RENT AND DEPOSIT LOAN SCHEME (LANDLORDS)

What is the Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme?

It is a scheme set up by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is aimed at people who need to rent a home in the private sector but are unable to raise the funds needed to cover the rent in advance and damage deposit normally asked for by private landlords. The loan is interest free and is paid back by affordable monthly repayments which we agree with each individual.

Who can apply?

Anyone homeless or threatened with homelessness who can show that they would not be able to secure a rented home without financial help and are found eligible for assistance by the council’s Housing Options Team. The loans relate to Assured Shorthold Tenancies of at least twelve months. In cases where single applicants are under the age of 25, we may consider applications involving renting from a resident landlord (lodgings), but this will be done on a case by case basis.

How does it work for Landlords?

• A Private Sector Tenancy Officer will visit your property and carry out a simple inspection. Photographs will be taken at that time.
• Rental potential, monthly rental and payment options will be discussed.
• Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
• Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
• Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
• Upon receipt of the cheque the landlord will grant a 12-month tenancy.

Notes:

• All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
• We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
• A current Gas Safety Certificate is required and this will need to be updated on an annual basis.
• A visual pre-tenancy electrical safety inspection is required and a full electrical test commissioned where necessary (it is recommended to carry out a periodic electrical test every 5 years)
• Property to have suitably sited smoke detector(s) one to each floor.
• If more convenient, we would suggest that the landlord take out a basic service contract with a service company such as British Gas, thus ensuring that inspections, services, call-outs are automatically covered.
• A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required.
• The landlord is responsible for Building Insurance & the tenant responsible for Contents Insurance.
• Prior to the tenant moving in, the landlord should take meter readings & advise utilities of change of name. For ease of transition, a list should be provided giving names, addresses & contact numbers of those utility companies. If key meters are fitted, then keys to be available on move-in day.
• Unless otherwise indicated on the Tenancy Agreement, the tenant is responsible for all utility bills, Council Tax, water rates, TV licence, et cetera.
It is important to ensure that all electrical appliances and fittings within the rented property are safe and in good working order. Unlike gas regulations, there is no law that says you must have a landlord electrical safety certificate. But, should any electrical fittings or appliances within your rental property cause harm to a tenant you could be held liable under the landlord’s ‘duty of care’. Basically a portable appliance is anything with a plug that fits into a 13amp socket. The obvious things to look for are frayed wires, scorched plug tops, cracked plugs or sockets and most importantly correct fuses. The tenant could sue you for damages, or worse you may be brought before a court for negligence under the regulations.

**We recommend landlords carry out the following:**

- Annual visual inspections by the landlord or agent - recording this on a safety checklist,
- Inspections on tenant change-overs, recording electrical equipment, its condition and fuses fitted
- Periodic inspections of electrical equipment by a qualified electrician.
- 5 yearly inspections by a qualified electrician to ensure safety and that the electrical system complies with current electrical regulations.
- Keep all records of these inspections.

**Size of Fuses?**

If no-one can remember schoolboy physics to find the correct fuse divide the wattage of the appliance by 240. e.g. 3000 watt kettle equals 3000 ÷ 240 = 12.5 amps.

Fuses come in 3, 5 and 13amps and it is quite dangerous to have a higher rated fuse than necessary. The following is a guide on fuse sizes required depending on the power of the appliance in Watts.

- Use a **3amp** fuse in plugs attached to **appliances up to 700 Watts**
- Use a **5amp fuse** in plugs attached to **appliances from 700 to 1200 Watts**
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The scheme is a partnership between you the owner, Southend on Sea Borough Council and Pathmeads who will manage and maintain your home.

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When ready to let Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will refer a tenant to occupy the property. No interest is charged on the loan. Pathmeads act as the landlord and will charge a management and maintenance fee as part of the rent. At the end of the lease the property will be returned to you ready to let, sell or occupy yourself.

If you would like more information on the scheme itself then please contact Stuart Burrell:

Southend Borough Council’s Empty Homes Officer on 01702 215002 ext 4363

Email emptyprop@southend.gov.uk

If you would more information on Pathmeads then please contact:

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Your personal Invitation to the Southend’s Landlord Forum

**Landlord Forum**

On Thursday 24th September 2009

The Members Conference Room, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, SOS.

4pm Welcome: Registration and Coffee

4.30pm A short introduction by Cllr Mark Flewitt

**Guest Speaker: Derek Leach. Eastern Landlords Association’s**

“Advice on Surviving the Credit Crunch”

David Flynn & Daniel Turner:

“Housing Benefit - A Business Opportunity”

Sian James a short presentation on

“The New Online Claim Form”

**R.S.V.P.** preferably by E-Mail to landlordsforum@southend.gov.uk or 01702 215002 ext. 5815 ASAP

New for 2010 - Landlord Accreditation

Southend Borough Council is the lead Authority in the forthcoming Thames Gateway South Essex Regional Landlord Accreditation Project.

Look out for details in the next issue to find out how you can become an Accredited Landlord and enjoy the benefits that accreditation brings.

You could even accredit your properties and work towards a **BRONZE** **SILVER** or **GOLD** standard property rating!
When is a Shared House a House in Multiple Occupation???

When there are 3 or more individual persons who do not form a family renting a bedroom, sharing the kitchen and bathroom facilities within the house or flat.

Shared houses have become the norm for students, young professional, nurses and groups of EU residents to rent BUT under the Housing Act 2004 once 3 non-related people share a house this will classify it as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

This change came about with the introduction of the Housing Act 2004. The full definition of a HMO can be found within the Housing Act 2004 s. 254.

If you have in the past:

a) issued one tenancy agreement to a collective group of people living in the property,
b) lived in the property and rent out 2 or more bedrooms,
c) had a mix of self contained flat-lets/studios and bedrooms with a shared kitchen and bathroom within the house,

then you are now operating an HMO.

So what does this mean to you?

There are a set of regulations which apply to you. The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 372) place a duty on YOU to manage the supply of gas, electric, water, drainage and waste disposal; to ensure the common areas are safe and sound including any gardens and yards, ensure there is suitable means of escape from fire and fire devices e.g. mains linked smoke detectors, and ensure all fixtures and fittings are safe within the lettable room. A copy of this can be downloaded from www.opsi.gov.uk.

If your property is being rented out as a HMO then please contact us.

If your property is a 2 storey house; a maisonette on the ground and first floor; or a flat then contact Stan Tite on 01702 215002 ext 5830.

If your property is a 3 storey house, has a converted attic or basements; is a maisonette on the first and second floors, then contact Clare Sheridan on 01702 215002 ext 5818 or Sarah Scotchmer on 01702 215002 ext 5412. Your property may require a property licence which can be discussed further with the above Officers.
How long do you think it takes to process a claim for Housing Benefit?

1 month?

1 week?

How does 1 day sound?

Introducing Fast Tracking

If an application is provided with the 7 essential items that make the application complete, the claim will be processed and a decision made within 1 working day!

Just ensure your tenant provides the following:

1. Fully completed claim form
2. Proof of identity for claimant, and for partner (if applicable)
3. Proof of National Insurance Number, and partners (if applicable)
4. Proof of all income and proof of partner’s income (if applicable)
5. Proof of income for anyone else residing in the home
6. Proof of all bank accounts, savings, investments and capital
7. Proof of rent

The Fast Tracking service immediately had a positive impact upon our processing times and over the last two years Fast Track claims have become a sizeable chunk of the claims that we process.

We have now started to advertise this already popular service throughout the borough.

Looking for advice about benefits?

Our website has recently been updated and contains the answers to many questions about Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

Check out the Landlords section of the website for information on claiming benefits aimed specifically at helping landlords with their tenants.

View the latest LHA rates online. www.southend.gov.uk If you have any comments regarding the benefits section of the website please e-mail benefits@southend.gov.uk

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Accreditation
HHSRS: Damp & Mould
Energy Efficiency
What is a PCB?
“Ask the Agent”
“On the Horizon”
Sanctuary Scheme
**When is a Shared House a House in Multiple Occupation??**

When there are 3 or more individual persons who do not form a family **renting a bedroom, sharing the kitchen and bathroom facilities** within the house or flat.

Shared houses have become the norm for students, young professional, nurses and groups of EU residents to rent BUT under the Housing Act 2004 once 3 non-related people share a house this will classify it as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

This change came about with the introduction of the Housing Act 2004. The full definition of a HMO can be found within the Housing Act 2004 s. 254.

If you have in the past:

a) issued one tenancy agreement to a collective group of people living in the property,

b) lived in the property and rent out 2 or more bedrooms,

c) had a mix of self contained flat-lets/studios and bedrooms with a shared kitchen and bathroom within the house,

then you are now operating an HMO.

So what does this mean to you?

There are a set of regulations which apply to you. **The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 372)** place a duty on **YOU** to manage the supply of gas, electric, water, drainage and waste disposal; to ensure the common areas are safe and sound including any gardens and yards, ensure there is suitable means of escape from fire and fire devices e.g. mains linked smoke detectors, and ensure all fixtures and fittings are safe within the letable room. A copy of this can be downloaded from [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk).

**If your property is being rented out as a HMO then please contact us.**

If your property is a 2 storey house; a maisonette on the ground and first floor; or a flat then contact **Stan Tite on 01702 215002 ext 5830.**

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How long do you think it takes to process a claim for Housing Benefit?

1 month?

1 week?

How does 1 day sound?

Introducing Fast Tracking

If an application is provided with the 7 essential items that make the application complete, the claim will be processed and a decision made within 1 working day!

Just ensure your tenant provides the following:

1. Fully completed claim form
2. Proof of identity for claimant, and for partner (if applicable)
3. Proof of National Insurance Number, and partners (if applicable)
4. Proof of all income and proof of partner’s income (if applicable)
5. Proof of income for anyone else residing in the home
6. Proof of all bank accounts, savings, investments and capital
7. Proof of rent

The Fast Tracking service immediately had a positive impact upon our processing times and over the last two years Fast Track claims have become a sizeable chunk of the claims that we process.

We have now started to advertise this already popular service throughout the borough.

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“Working Together to Have your Say”
Domestic Gas Health and Safety (Sandra Wilson, August 2009)

In 2005/06 16 people died from Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which had not been properly installed or maintained.

Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You MUST keep a record of these safety checks and you MUST issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to DEATH if the concentration level is high enough.

Recognising the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide:

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a SILENT KILLER. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

Spotting the Signs of Carbon Monoxide

You can tell if a gas appliance is working correctly by looking at the flame. If it is bright BLUE it is healthy. If it is YELLOW or ORANGE there is evidence of a possible Carbon Monoxide presence.

Other signs to look for include brownish-yellow stains around the appliance, pilot lights that frequently blow out and condensation in the room where the appliance is installed.

Your tenant’s are at risk of Carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your appliance is poorly installed
- Your appliance is not working properly
- Your appliance has not been safety checked & serviced regularly
- There is not enough fresh air in the room
- Your chimney flue is blocked
- YOU ALLOW ILLEGAL GAS WORKERS TO INSTALL OR MAINTAIN YOUR APPLIANCES
You **MUST** have your gas appliances safety-checked by a **GAS SAFE** registered installer every year.

**GAS SAFE** registered installers are gas experts and have undergone extensive training to qualify for registration. **BUT** **REMEMBER, GAS SAFE** registration does not automatically cover all areas of gas work. Most installers specialise in one area, so check that your installer is qualified to carry out the work you are asking them to do.

You can **CHECK YOUR INSTALLERS STATUS** with the **GAS SAFE** Customer Services Team (0800 408 5500) or you can look on the reverse of the installer’s **GAS SAFE** ID card.

**NEVER** allow anyone without a valid **GAS SAFE** registration number to work on your gas appliances.

**AUDIBLE CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS**

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Make sure any alarms you buy conform to current British and European safety standards. ‘CE’ and ‘BS’ safety symbols will be clearly displayed on the packaging.

**NEVER BUY AN ALARM THAT DOESN’T CARRY THE ‘CE’ OR ‘BS’ SAFETY MARK**

**ALWAYS CHOOSE AN AUDIBLE ALARM SO TENANTS CAN BE ALERTED EVEN IF ASLEEP.**

**DO YOUR TENANT’S KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND IF THEY SMELL GAS?**

It is good practice to provide emergency information to your tenants – do you include this in your tenancy pack?

The type of information you should consider providing is this:

**If you smell gas then call: 0800 111 999 (England, Scotland and Wales)**

- **If you are calling from a mobile phone then GO OUTSIDE FIRST**
- **Do NOT smoke**
- **Do NOT turn light switches on**
- **Do NOT do anything to create a spark**

**If you do NOT need to switch on a light to do so:**

- **Turn off** the supply at the meter &
- **Open** doors and windows and wait outside for the emergency engineer to arrive

Anyone who appears to be suffering from the effects of gas inhalation must be removed from the contaminated area, placed in the open air and given oxygen if available. Keep them rested and avoid exertion.

**WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?**

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

Contact details for The Health and Safety Executive will be provided to any tenant requesting assistance in dealing with disrepair to gas appliances which are the responsibility of the landlord.

“**Working Together to Have your Say**”
Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

Below you will find a draft copy that we intend to include and would appreciate you spending a couple of moments reading this through in order to identify whether or not we have addressed all of the questions you may have. If we’ve missed anything or you have any other comments to make, we would welcome your input by contacting The Private Sector Tenancy Officer:

Chris Horsley, on 01702 215002 ext 4319 or e-mail to chrishorsley@southend.gov.uk.

A GUIDE TO RENT AND DEPOSIT LOAN SCHEME (LANDLORDS)

What is the Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme?
It is a scheme set up by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is aimed at people who need to rent a home in the private sector but are unable to raise the funds needed to cover the rent in advance and damage deposit normally asked for by private landlords. The loan is interest free and is paid back by affordable monthly repayments which we agree with each individual.

Who can apply?
Anyone homeless or threatened with homelessness who can show that they would not be able to secure a rented home without financial help and are found eligible for assistance by the council’s Housing Options Team. The loans relate to Assured Shorthold Tenancies of at least twelve months. In cases where single applicants are under the age of 25, we may consider applications involving renting from a resident landlord (lodgings), but this will be done on a case by case basis.

How does it work for Landlords?

- A Private Sector Tenancy Officer will visit your property and carry out a simple inspection. Photographs will be taken at that time.
- Rental potential, monthly rental and payment options will be discussed.
- Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
- Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
- Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
- Upon receipt of the cheque the landlord will grant a 12-month tenancy.

Notes:

- All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
- We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
- A current Gas Safety Certificate is required and this will need to be updated on an annual basis.
- A visual pre-tenancy electrical safety inspection is required and a full electrical test commissioned where necessary (it is recommended to carry out a periodic electrical test every 5 years)
- Property to have suitably sited smoke detector(s) one to each floor.
- If more convenient, we would suggest that the landlord take out a basic service contract with a service company such as British Gas, thus ensuring that inspections, services, call-outs are automatically covered.
- A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required.
- The landlord is responsible for Building Insurance & the tenant responsible for Contents Insurance.
- Prior to the tenant moving in, the landlord should take meter readings & advise utilities of change of name. For ease of transition, a list should be provided giving names, addresses & contact numbers of those utility companies. If key meters are fitted, then keys to be available on move-in day.
- Unless otherwise indicated on the Tenancy Agreement, the tenant is responsible for all utility bills, Council Tax, water rates, TV licence, etc.
Electrical issues and appliances  
*Courtesy of the Eastern Landlords Association News Issue 1, 2009*

It is important to ensure that all electrical appliances and fittings within the rented property are safe and in good working order. Unlike gas regulations, there is no law that says you must have a landlord electrical safety certificate. But, should any electrical fittings or appliances within your rental property cause harm to a tenant you could be held liable under the landlord’s ‘duty of care’. Basically a portable appliance is anything with a plug that fits into a 13amp socket. The obvious things to look for are frayed wires, scorched plug tops, cracked plugs or sockets and most importantly correct fuses. The tenant could sue you for damages, or worse you may be brought before a court for negligence under the regulations.

**We recommend landlords carry out the following:**

- Annual visual inspections by the landlord or agent - recording this on a safety checklist,
- Inspections on tenant change-overs, recording electrical equipment, its condition and fuses fitted
- Periodic inspections of electrical equipment by a qualified electrician.
- 5 yearly inspections by a qualified electrician to ensure safety and that the electrical system complies with current electrical regulations.
- Keep all records of these inspections.

**Size of Fuses?**

If no-one can remember schoolboy physics to find the correct fuse divide the wattage of the appliance by 240. e.g. 3000 watt kettle equals \( \frac{3000}{240} = 12.5 \) amps.

Fuses come in 3, 5 and 13amps and it is quite dangerous to have a higher rated fuse than necessary. The following is a guide on fuse sizes required depending on the power of the appliance in Watts.

- Use a **3amp** fuse in plugs attached to **appliances up to 700 Watts**
- Use a **5amp** fuse in plugs attached to **appliances from 700 to 1200 Watts**
- Use a **13amp** fuse in plugs attached to **appliances from 1200 to 3000 Watts**

Nothing will stop tenants putting in wrong fuses so a check before each let would be sensible.

I think it would be a long time before it becomes mandatory for the simple reason that most lets are ‘unfurnished’ with a minimum of appliances and there would be more risk involved in the tenants own appliances than anything supplied by landlords.

*“Working Together to Have your Say”*
The Thames Gateway South Essex PLACE Scheme

Do you have a property that has been empty for some time? Would you like it repaired, renovated and let?

Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Councils are collaborating as part of the Thames Gateway PLACE Scheme in conjunction with Pathmeads Housing Association to bring empty homes back into use.

The scheme is designed to assist owners in bringing empty properties back into use. The Loan is for a maximum of £20,000. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council are particularly interested in 2 to 3 bedroom properties.

The scheme is a partnership between you the owner, Southend on Sea Borough Council and Pathmeads who will manage and maintain your home.

As a condition we will only accept properties that the owner is prepared to let at no more than the weekly local housing allowance level.

In Southend-on-Sea this is approximately £115.38 per week for a one-bedroom property, £150.00 per week for a two-bedroom property and £230.77 per week for a four-bedroom property. The up to date figures are available on the Council’s web site at: www.southend.gov.uk and type local housing allowance into the search field.

If you are interested in the scheme Pathmeads will inspect the property and tell you how much it will cost to renovate. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will fund the renovation costs based on the works conducted by Pathmeads. We would be looking for a five-year lease agreement with you. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will confirm the rent level that is acceptable. Once the lease is signed between all parties work will commence.

When ready to let Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will refer a tenant to occupy the property. No interest is charged on the loan. Pathmeads act as the landlord and will charge a management and maintenance fee as part of the rent. At the end of the lease the property will be returned to you ready to let, sell or occupy yourself.

If you would like more information on the scheme itself then please contact Stuart Burrell:

Southend Borough Council’s Empty Homes Officer on 01702 215002 ext 4363

Email emptyprop@southend.gov.uk

If you would more information on Pathmeads then please contact:

Hasmita Bhojani on 020 8900 4722

Email landlords@pathmeads.org.uk or visit their website at www.pathmeads.org.uk

“Working Together to Have your Say”
This Newsletter is to share useful information and articles so that we can work together to improve Southend's private rental sector and work more closely with all our partners. If you would like to write or suggest a topic for a future article or have some interesting story or information to share please contact Victoria Routledge, email landlordsforum@southend.gov.uk

Your personal Invitation to the Southend’s Landlord Forum

Landlord Forum
On Thursday 24th September 2009

The Members Conference Room, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, SOS.

4pm Welcome: Registration and Coffee
4.30pm A short introduction by Cllr Mark Flewitt

Guest Speaker: Derek Leach. Eastern Landlords Association’s
“Advice on Surviving the Credit Crunch”

David Flynn & Daniel Turner:
“Housing Benefit - A Business Opportunity”

Sian James a short presentation on
“The New Online Claim Form”

R.S.V.P. preferably by E-Mail to landlordsforum@southend.gov.uk
or 01702 215002 ext. 5815 ASAP

New for 2010 - Landlord Accreditation

Southend Borough Council is the lead Authority in the forthcoming Thames Gateway South Essex Regional Landlord Accreditation Project.

Look out for details in the next issue to find out how you can become an Accredited Landlord and enjoy the benefits that accreditation brings.

You could even accredit your properties and work towards a BRONZE SILVER or GOLD standard property rating!

Future Issues:
Accreditation
HHSRS: Damp & Mould
Energy Efficiency
What is a PCB?
“Ask the Agent”
“On the Horizon”
Sanctuary Scheme
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The Thames Gateway South Essex PLACE Scheme

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Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Councils are collaborating as part of the Thames Gateway PLACE Scheme in conjunction with Pathmeads Housing Association to bring empty homes back into use.

The scheme is designed to assist owners in bringing empty properties back into use. The Loan is for a maximum of £20,000. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council are particularly interested in 2 to 3 bedroom properties.

The scheme is a partnership between you the owner, Southend on Sea Borough Council and Pathmeads who will manage and maintain your home.

As a condition we will only accept properties that the owner is prepared to let at no more than the weekly local housing allowance level.

In Southend-on-Sea this is approximately £115.38 per week for a one-bedroom property, £150.00 per week for a two-bedroom property and £230.77 per week for a four-bedroom property. The up to date figures are available on the Council’s web site at: www.southend.gov.uk and type local housing allowance into the search field.

If you are interested in the scheme Pathmeads will inspect the property and tell you how much it will cost to renovate. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will fund the renovation costs based on the works conducted by Pathmeads. We would be looking for a five-year lease agreement with you. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will confirm the rent level that is acceptable. Once the lease is signed between all parties work will commence.

When ready to let Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will refer a tenant to occupy the property. No interest is charged on the loan. Pathmeads act as the landlord and will charge a management and maintenance fee as part of the rent. At the end of the lease the property will be returned to you ready to let, sell or occupy yourself.

If you would like more information on the scheme itself then please contact Stuart Burrell:

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Email emptyprop@southend.gov.uk

If you would more information on Pathmeads then please contact:

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Email landlords@pathmeads.org.uk or visit their website at www.pathmeads.org.uk

“Working Together to Have your Say”
Landlords Newsletter
“Working Together to Have your Say”

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When is a Shared House a House in Multiple Occupation??

When there are 3 or more individual persons who do not form a family renting a bedroom, sharing the kitchen and bathroom facilities within the house or flat.

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So what does this mean to you?

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1 month?

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How does 1 day sound?

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If an application is provided with the 7 essential items that make the application complete, the claim will be processed and a decision made within 1 working day!

Just ensure your tenant provides the following:

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The Fast Tracking service immediately had a positive impact upon our processing times and over the last two years Fast Track claims have become a sizeable chunk of the claims that we process.

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Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You MUST keep a record of these safety checks and you MUST issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to DEATH if the concentration level is high enough.

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Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a SILENT KILLER. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

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Your tenant’s are at risk of Carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your appliance is poorly installed
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- There is not enough fresh air in the room
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- YOU ALLOW ILLEGAL GAS WORKERS TO INSTALL OR MAINTAIN YOUR APPLIANCES
You MUST have your gas appliances safety-checked by a GAS SAFE registered installer every year. GAS SAFE registered installers are gas experts and have undergone extensive training to qualify for registration. BUT REMEMBER, GAS SAFE registration does not automatically cover all areas of gas work. Most installers specialise in one area, so check that your installer is qualified to carry out the work you are asking them to do.

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ALWAYS CHOOSE AN AUDIBLE ALARM SO TENANTS CAN BE ALERTED EVEN IF ASLEEP.

DO YOUR TENANT’S KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND IF THEY SMELL GAS?

It is good practice to provide emergency information to your tenants – do you include this in your tenancy pack?

The type of information you should consider providing is this:

If you smell gas then call: 0800 111 999 (England, Scotland and Wales)

• If you are calling from a mobile phone then GO OUTSIDE FIRST
• Do NOT smoke
• Do NOT turn light switches on
• Do NOT do anything to create a spark

If you do NOT need to switch on a light to do so:

• Turn off the supply at the meter &
• Open doors and windows and wait outside for the emergency engineer to arrive

Anyone who appears to be suffering from the effects of gas inhalation must be removed from the contaminated area, placed in the open air and given oxygen if available. Keep them rested and avoid exertion.

WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

Contact details for The Health and Safety Executive will be provided to any tenant requesting assistance in dealing with disrepair to gas appliances which are the responsibility of the landlord.

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Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

Below you will find a draft copy that we intend to include and would appreciate you spending a couple of moments reading this through in order to identify whether or not we have addressed all of the questions you may have. If we’ve missed anything or you have any other comments to make, we would welcome your input by contacting The Private Sector Tenancy Officer:

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A GUIDE TO RENT AND DEPOSIT LOAN SCHEME (LANDLORDS)

What is the Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme?
It is a scheme set up by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is aimed at people who need to rent a home in the private sector but are unable to raise the funds needed to cover the rent in advance and damage deposit normally asked for by private landlords. The loan is interest free and is paid back by affordable monthly repayments which we agree with each individual.

Who can apply?
Anyone homeless or threatened with homelessness who can show that they would not be able to secure a rented home without financial help and are found eligible for assistance by the council’s Housing Options Team. The loans relate to Assured Shorthold Tenancies of at least twelve months. In cases where single applicants are under the age of 25, we may consider applications involving renting from a resident landlord (lodgings), but this will be done on a case by case basis.

How does it work for Landlords?
• A Private Sector Tenancy Officer will visit your property and carry out a simple inspection. Photographs will be taken at that time.
• Rental potential, monthly rental and payment options will be discussed.
• Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
• Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
• Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
• Upon receipt of the cheque the landlord will grant a 12-month tenancy.

Notes:
• All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
• We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
• A current Gas Safety Certificate is required and this will need to be updated on an annual basis.
• A visual pre-tenancy electrical safety inspection is required and a full electrical test commissioned where necessary (it is recommended to carry out a periodic electrical test every 5 years)
• Property to have suitably sited smoke detector(s) one to each floor.
• If more convenient, we would suggest that the landlord take out a basic service contract with a service company such as British Gas, thus ensuring that inspections, services, call-outs are automatically covered.
• A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required.
• The landlord is responsible for Building Insurance & the tenant responsible for Contents Insurance.
• Prior to the tenant moving in, the landlord should take meter readings & advise utilities of change of name. For ease of transition, a list should be provided giving names, addresses & contact numbers of those utility companies. If key meters are fitted, then keys to be available on move-in day.
• Unless otherwise indicated on the Tenancy Agreement, the tenant is responsible for all utility bills, Council Tax, water rates, TV licence, etcetera.
Electrical issues and appliances
(Courtesy of the Eastern Landlords Association News Issue 1, 2009)

It is important to ensure that all electrical appliances and fittings within the rented property are safe and in good working order. Unlike gas regulations, there is no law that says you must have a landlord electrical safety certificate. But, should any electrical fittings or appliances within your rental property cause harm to a tenant you could be held liable under the landlord’s ‘duty of care’. Basically a portable appliance is anything with a plug that fits into a 13amp socket. The obvious things to look for are frayed wires, scorched plug tops, cracked plugs or sockets and most importantly correct fuses. The tenant could sue you for damages, or worse you may be brought before a court for negligence under the regulations.

We recommend landlords carry out the following:

- Annual visual inspections by the landlord or agent - recording this on a safety checklist,
- Inspections on tenant change-overs, recording electrical equipment, its condition and fuses fitted
- Periodic inspections of electrical equipment by a qualified electrician.
- 5 yearly inspections by a qualified electrician to ensure safety and that the electrical system complies with current electrical regulations.
- Keep all records of these inspections.

Size of Fuses?

If no-one can remember schoolboy physics to find the correct fuse divide the wattage of the appliance by 240.e.g. 3000 watt kettle equals 3000 ÷ 240 = 12.5 amps.

Fuses come in 3, 5 and 13amps and it is quite dangerous to have a higher rated fuse than necessary. The following is a guide on fuse sizes required depending on the power of the appliance in Watts.

- Use a **3amp** fuse in plugs attached to **appliances up to 700 Watts**
- Use a **5amp** fuse in plugs attached to **appliances from 700 to 1200 Watts**
- Use a **13amp** fuse in plugs attached to **appliances from 1200 to 3000 Watts**

Nothing will stop tenants putting in wrong fuses so a check before each let would be sensible.

I think it would be a long time before it becomes mandatory for the simple reason that most lets are ‘unfurnished’ with a minimum of appliances and there would be more risk involved in the tenants own appliances than anything supplied by landlords.

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Notes:
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- We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
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- Property to have suitably sited smoke detector(s) one to each floor.
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If no-one can remember schoolboy physics to find the correct fuse divide the wattage of the appliance by 240.e.g. 3000 watt kettle equals 3000 ÷ 240 = 12.5 amps.

Fuses come in 3, 5 and 13amps and it is quite dangerous to have a higher rated fuse than necessary. The following is a guide on fuse sizes required depending on the power of the appliance in Watts.

Use a **3amp** fuse in plugs attached to **appliances up to 700 Watts**
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Nothing will stop tenants putting in wrong fuses so a check before each let would be sensible.

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3. Proof of National Insurance Number, and partners (if applicable)
4. Proof of all income and proof of partner’s income (if applicable)
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6. Proof of all bank accounts, savings, investments and capital
7. Proof of rent

The Fast Tracking service immediately had a positive impact upon our processing times and over the last two years Fast Track claims have become a sizeable chunk of the claims that we process.

We have now started to advertise this already popular service throughout the borough.

Looking for advice about benefits?
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Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You MUST keep a record of these safety checks and you MUST issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to DEATH if the concentration level is high enough.

Recognising the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide:

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a SILENT KILLER. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

Spotting the Signs of Carbon Monoxide

You can tell if a gas appliance is working correctly by looking at the flame. If it is bright BLUE it is healthy. If it is YELLOW or ORANGE there is evidence of a possible Carbon Monoxide presence.

Other signs to look for include brownish-yellow stains around the appliance, pilot lights that frequently blow out and condensation in the room where the appliance is installed.

Your tenant’s are at risk of Carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your appliance is poorly installed
- Your appliance is not working properly
- Your appliance has not been safety checked & serviced regularly
- There is not enough fresh air in the room
- Your chimney flue is blocked
- YOU ALLOW ILLEGAL GAS WORKERS TO INSTALL OR MAINTAIN YOUR APPLIANCES
**GAS SAFE REGISTERED INSTALLERS**

You **MUST** have your gas appliances safety-checked by a **GAS SAFE** registered installer every year.

**GAS SAFE** registered installers are gas experts and have undergone extensive training to qualify for registration. **BUT REMEMBER, GAS SAFE** registration does not automatically cover all areas of gas work. Most installers specialise in one area, so check that your installer is qualified to carry out the work you are asking them to do.

You can **CHECK YOUR INSTALLERS STATUS** with the **GAS SAFE** Customer Services Team (0800 408 5500) or you can look on the reverse of the installer’s **GAS SAFE** ID card.

**NEVER** allow anyone without a valid **GAS SAFE** registration number to work on your gas appliances.

**AUDIBLE CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS**

Apart from having your gas appliances safety checked annually, the next best thing you can do is fit a CE-approved audible carbon monoxide alarm. Typically, these cost around £25.00 which is a small price to pay if it saves a life.

Make sure any alarms you buy conform to current British and European safety standards. ‘CE’ and ‘BS’ safety symbols will be clearly displayed on the packaging.

**NEVER BUY AN ALARM THAT DOESN’T CARRY THE ‘CE’ OR ‘BS’ SAFETY MARK**

**ALWAYS CHOOSE AN AUDIBLE ALARM SO TENANTS CAN BE ALERTED EVEN IF ASLEEP.**

**DO YOUR TENANT’S KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND IF THEY SMELL GAS?**

It is good practice to provide emergency information to your tenants – do you include this in your tenancy pack?

The type of information you should consider providing is this:

**If you smell gas then call: 0800 111 999**

*(England, Scotland and Wales)*

- If you are calling from a mobile phone then **GO OUTSIDE FIRST**
- **Do NOT** smoke
- **Do NOT** turn light switches on
- **Do NOT** do anything to create a spark

**If you do NOT need to switch on a light to do so:**

- **Turn off** the supply at the meter &
- **Open** doors and windows and wait outside for the emergency engineer to arrive

Anyone who appears to be suffering from the effects of gas inhalation must be removed from the contaminated area, placed in the open air and given oxygen if available. Keep them rested and avoid exertion.

**WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?**

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

Contact details for The Health and Safety Executive will be provided to any tenant requesting assistance in dealing with disrepair to gas appliances which are the responsibility of the landlord.

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*“Working Together to Have your Say”*
Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

Below you will find a draft copy that we intend to include and would appreciate you spending a couple of moments reading this through in order to identify whether or not we have addressed all of the questions you may have. If we’ve missed anything or you have any other comments to make, we would welcome your input by contacting The Private Sector Tenancy Officer:

Chris Horsley, on 01702 215002 ext 4319 or e-mail to chrishorsley@southend.gov.uk.

A GUIDE TO RENT AND DEPOSIT LOAN SCHEME (LANDLORDS)

What is the Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme?

It is a scheme set up by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is aimed at people who need to rent a home in the private sector but are unable to raise the funds needed to cover the rent in advance and damage deposit normally asked for by private landlords. The loan is interest free and is paid back by affordable monthly repayments which we agree with each individual.

Who can apply?

Anyone homeless or threatened with homelessness who can show that they would not be able to secure a rented home without financial help and are found eligible for assistance by the council’s Housing Options Team. The loans relate to Assured Shorthold Tenancies of at least twelve months. In cases where single applicants are under the age of 25, we may consider applications involving renting from a resident landlord (lodgings), but this will be done on a case by case basis.

How does it work for Landlords?

- A Private Sector Tenancy Officer will visit your property and carry out a simple inspection. Photographs will be taken at that time.
- Rental potential, monthly rental and payment options will be discussed.
- Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
- Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
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Notes:

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AUDIBLE CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

Apart from having your gas appliances safety checked annually, the next best thing you can do is fit a CE-approved audible carbon monoxide alarm. Typically, these cost around £25.00 which is a small price to pay if it saves a life.

Make sure any alarms you buy conform to current British and European safety standards. ‘CE’ and ‘BS’ safety symbols will be clearly displayed on the packaging.

NEVER BUY AN ALARM THAT DOESN’T CARRY THE ‘CE’ OR ‘BS’ SAFETY MARK

ALWAYS CHOOSE AN AUDIBLE ALARM SO TENANTS CAN BE ALERTED EVEN IF ASLEEP.

DO YOUR TENANT’S KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND IF THEY SMELL GAS?

It is good practice to provide emergency information to your tenants – do you include this in your tenancy pack?

The type of information you should consider providing is this:

If you smell gas then call: 0800 111 999
(England, Scotland and Wales)

- If you are calling from a mobile phone then GO OUTSIDE FIRST
- Do NOT smoke
- Do NOT turn light switches on
- Do NOT do anything to create a spark

If you do NOT need to switch on a light to do so:

- Turn off the supply at the meter &
- Open doors and windows and wait outside for the emergency engineer to arrive

Anyone who appears to be suffering from the effects of gas inhalation must be removed from the contaminated area, placed in the open air and given oxygen if available. Keep them rested and avoid exertion.

WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

Contact details for The Health and Safety Executive will be provided to any tenant requesting assistance in dealing with disrepair to gas appliances which are the responsibility of the landlord.

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Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

Below you will find a draft copy that we intend to include and would appreciate you spending a couple of moments reading this through in order to identify whether or not we have addressed all of the questions you may have. If we’ve missed anything or you have any other comments to make, we would welcome your input by contacting The Private Sector Tenancy Officer:

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It is a scheme set up by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is aimed at people who need to rent a home in the private sector but are unable to raise the funds needed to cover the rent in advance and damage deposit normally asked for by private landlords. The loan is interest free and is paid back by affordable monthly repayments which we agree with each individual.

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How does it work for Landlords?
• A Private Sector Tenancy Officer will visit your property and carry out a simple inspection. Photographs will be taken at that time.
• Rental potential, monthly rental and payment options will be discussed.
• Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
• Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
• Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
• Upon receipt of the cheque the landlord will grant a 12-month tenancy.

Notes:
• All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
• We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
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Email emptyprop@southend.gov.uk

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Hasmita Bhojani on 020 8900 4722

Email landlords@pathmeads.org.uk or visit their website at www.pathmeads.org.uk

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Your personal Invitation to the Southend’s Landlord Forum

Landlord Forum
On Thursday 24th September 2009
The Members Conference Room, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, SOS.
4pm Welcome: Registration and Coffee
4.30pm A short introduction by Cllr Mark Flewitt
Guest Speaker: Derek Leach. Eastern Landlords Association’s
“Advice on Surviving the Credit Crunch”
David Flynn & Daniel Turner:
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Sian James a short presentation on
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R.S.V.P. preferably by E-Mail to landlordsforum@southend.gov.uk
or 01702 215002 ext. 5815 ASAP

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You could even accredit your properties and work towards a BRONZE SILVER or GOLD standard property rating!

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HHSRS: Damp & Mould
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When there are 3 or more individual persons who do not form a family **renting a bedroom, sharing the kitchen and bathroom facilities** within the house or flat.

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This change came about with the introduction of the Housing Act 2004. The full definition of a HMO can be found within the Housing Act 2004 s. 254.

If you have in the past:

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**then you are now operating an HMO.**

So what does this mean to you?

There are a set of regulations which apply to you. The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 372) place a duty on **YOU** to manage the supply of gas, electric, water, drainage and waste disposal; to ensure the common areas are safe and sound including any gardens and yards, ensure there is suitable means of escape from fire and fire devices e.g. mains linked smoke detectors, and ensure all fixtures and fittings are safe within the letable room. A copy of this can be downloaded from **www.opsi.gov.uk**.

**If your property is being rented out as a HMO then please contact us.**

If your property is a 2 storey house; a maisonette on the ground and first floor; or a flat then contact **Stan Tite on 01702 215002 ext 5830.**

If your property is a 3 storey house, has a converted attic or basements; is a maisonette on the first and second floors, then contact **Clare Sheridan on 01702 215002 ext 5818 or Sarah Scotchmer on 01702 215002 ext 5412.** Your property may require a property licence which can be discussed further with the above Officers.
How long do you think it takes to process a claim for Housing Benefit?

1 month?

1 week?

How does 1 day sound?

Introducing Fast Tracking

If an application is provided with the 7 essential items that make the application complete, the claim will be processed and a decision made within 1 working day!

Just ensure your tenant provides the following:

1. Fully completed claim form
2. Proof of identity for claimant, and for partner (if applicable)
3. Proof of National Insurance Number, and partners (if applicable)
4. Proof of all income and proof of partner’s income (if applicable)
5. Proof of income for anyone else residing in the home
6. Proof of all bank accounts, savings, investments and capital
7. Proof of rent

The Fast Tracking service immediately had a positive impact upon our processing times and over the last two years Fast Track claims have become a sizeable chunk of the claims that we process.

We have now started to advertise this already popular service throughout the borough.

Looking for advice about benefits?

Our website has recently been updated and contains the answers to many questions about Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

Check out the Landlords section of the website for information on claiming benefits aimed specifically at helping landlords with their tenants.

View the latest LHA rates online. [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk) If you have any comments regarding the benefits section of the website please e-mail benefits@southend.gov.uk

“Working Together to Have your Say”
Domestic Gas Health and Safety (Sandra Wilson, August 2009)

In 2005/06 16 people died from Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which had not been properly installed or maintained.

Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You MUST keep a record of these safety checks and you MUST issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to DEATH if the concentration level is high enough.

Recognising the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide:

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a SILENT KILLER. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

Spotting the Signs of Carbon Monoxide

You can tell if a gas appliance is working correctly by looking at the flame. If it is bright BLUE it is healthy. If it is YELLOW or ORANGE there is evidence of a possible Carbon Monoxide presence.

Other signs to look for include brownish-yellow stains around the appliance, pilot lights that frequently blow out and condensation in the room where the appliance is installed.

Your tenant’s are at risk of Carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your appliance is poorly installed
- Your appliance is not working properly
- Your appliance has not been safety checked & serviced regularly
- There is not enough fresh air in the room
- Your chimney flue is blocked
- YOU ALLOW ILLEGAL GAS WORKERS TO INSTALL OR MAINTAIN YOUR APPLIANCES
GAS SAFE REGISTERED INSTALLERS

You **MUST** have your gas appliances safety-checked by a GAS SAFE registered installer every year.

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Electrical issues and appliances
(Courtesy of the Eastern Landlords Association News Issue 1, 2009)

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6. Proof of all bank accounts, savings, investments and capital
7. Proof of rent

The Fast Tracking service immediately had a positive impact upon our processing times and over the last two years Fast Track claims have become a sizeable chunk of the claims that we process.

We have now started to advertise this already popular service throughout the borough.

Looking for advice about benefits?

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Check out the Landlords section of the website for information on claiming benefits aimed specifically at helping landlords with their tenants.

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“Working Together to Have your Say”
In 2005/06 16 people died from Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which had not been properly installed or maintained.

Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

**SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES**

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You MUST keep a record of these safety checks and you MUST issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

**Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.**

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to DEATH if the concentration level is high enough.

**Recognising the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide:**

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a SILENT KILLER. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

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- **Do NOT** smoke
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**WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?**

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

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A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

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• Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
• Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
• Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
• Upon receipt of the cheque the landlord will grant a 12-month tenancy.

Notes:

• All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
• We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
• A current Gas Safety Certificate is required and this will need to be updated on an annual basis.
• A visual pre-tenancy electrical safety inspection is required and a full electrical test commissioned where necessary (it is recommended to carry out a periodic electrical test every 5 years)
• Property to have suitably sited smoke detector(s) one to each floor.
• If more convenient, we would suggest that the landlord take out a basic service contract with a service company such as British Gas, thus ensuring that inspections, services, call-outs are automatically covered.
• A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required.
• The landlord is responsible for Building Insurance & the tenant responsible for Contents Insurance.
• Prior to the tenant moving in, the landlord should take meter readings & advise utilities of change of name. For ease of transition, a list should be provided giving names, addresses & contact numbers of those utility companies. If key meters are fitted, then keys to be available on move-in day.
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The scheme is a partnership between you the owner, Southend on Sea Borough Council and Pathmeads who will manage and maintain your home.

As a condition we will only accept properties that the owner is prepared to let at no more than the weekly local housing allowance level.

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When ready to let Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will refer a tenant to occupy the property. No interest is charged on the loan. Pathmeads act as the landlord and will charge a management and maintenance fee as part of the rent. At the end of the lease the property will be returned to you ready to let, sell or occupy yourself.

If you would like more information on the scheme itself then please contact Stuart Burrell:

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Landlord Forum
On Thursday 24th September 2009
The Members Conference Room, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, SOS.
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4.30pm A short introduction by Cllr Mark Flewitt
Guest Speaker: Derek Leach. Eastern Landlords Association’s
“Advice on Surviving the Credit Crunch”
David Flynn & Daniel Turner:
“Housing Benefit - A Business Opportunity”
Sian James a short presentation on
“The New Online Claim Form”
R.S.V.P. preferably by E-Mail to landlordsforum@southend.gov.uk
or 01702 215002 ext. 5815 ASAP

New for 2010 - Landlord Accreditation
Southend Borough Council is the lead Authority in the forthcoming Thames Gateway South Essex Regional Landlord Accreditation Project.

Look out for details in the next issue to find out how you can become an Accredited Landlord and enjoy the benefits that accreditation brings.

You could even accredit your properties and work towards a BRONZE SILVER or GOLD standard property rating!
When is a Shared House a House in Multiple Occupation???

When there are 3 or more individual persons who do not form a family renting a bedroom, sharing the kitchen and bathroom facilities within the house or flat.

Shared houses have become the norm for students, young professional, nurses and groups of EU residents to rent BUT under the Housing Act 2004 once 3 non-related people share a house this will classify it as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

This change came about with the introduction of the Housing Act 2004. The full definition of a HMO can be found within the Housing Act 2004 s. 254.

If you have in the past:

a) issued one tenancy agreement to a collective group of people living in the property,
b) lived in the property and rent out 2 or more bedrooms,
c) had a mix of self contained flat-lets/studios and bedrooms with a shared kitchen and bathroom within the house,

then you are now operating an HMO.

So what does this mean to you?

There are a set of regulations which apply to you. The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 372) place a duty on YOU to manage the supply of gas, electric, water, drainage and waste disposal; to ensure the common areas are safe and sound including any gardens and yards, ensure there is suitable means of escape from fire and fire devices e.g. mains linked smoke detectors, and ensure all fixtures and fittings are safe within the lettable room. A copy of this can be downloaded from www.opsi.gov.uk.

If your property is being rented out as a HMO then please contact us.

If your property is a 2 storey house; a maisonette on the ground and first floor; or a flat then contact Stan Tite on 01702 215002 ext 5830.

If your property is a 3 storey house, has a converted attic or basements; is a maisonette on the first and second floors, then contact Clare Sheridan on 01702 215002 ext 5818 or Sarah Scotchmer on 01702 215002 ext 5412. Your property may require a property licence which can be discussed further with the above Officers.
How long do you think it takes to process a claim for Housing Benefit?

1 month?
1 week?

How does 1 day sound?

Introducing Fast Tracking

If an application is provided with the 7 essential items that make the application complete, the claim will be processed and a decision made within 1 working day!

Just ensure your tenant provides the following:

1. Fully completed claim form
2. Proof of identity for claimant, and for partner (if applicable)
3. Proof of National Insurance Number, and partners (if applicable)
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Domestic Gas Health and Safety (Sandra Wilson, August 2009)

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Sian James a short presentation on
“The New Online Claim Form”
R.S.V.P. preferably by E-Mail to landlordsforum@southend.gov.uk or 01702 215002 ext. 5815 ASAP

New for 2010 - Landlord Accreditation
Southend Borough Council is the lead Authority in the forthcoming Thames Gateway South Essex Regional Landlord Accreditation Project.

Look out for details in the next issue to find out how you can become an Accredited Landlord and enjoy the benefits that accreditation brings.

You could even accredit your properties and work towards a BRONZE SILVER or GOLD standard property rating!

Future Issues:
Accreditation
HHSRS: Damp & Mould
Energy Efficiency
What is a PCB?
“Ask the Agent”
“On the Horizon”
Sanctuary Scheme
When is a Shared House a House in Multiple Occupation???

When there are 3 or more individual persons who do not form a family renting a bedroom, sharing the kitchen and bathroom facilities within the house or flat.

Shared houses have become the norm for students, young professional, nurses and groups of EU residents to rent BUT under the Housing Act 2004 once 3 non-related people share a house this will classify it as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

This change came about with the introduction of the Housing Act 2004. The full definition of a HMO can be found within the Housing Act 2004 s. 254.

If you have in the past:

a) issued one tenancy agreement to a collective group of people living in the property,

b) lived in the property and rent out 2 or more bedrooms,

c) had a mix of self contained flat-lets/studios and bedrooms with a shared kitchen and bathroom within the house,

then you are now operating an HMO.

So what does this mean to you?

There are a set of regulations which apply to you. The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 372) place a duty on YOU to manage the supply of gas, electric, water, drainage and waste disposal; to ensure the common areas are safe and sound including any gardens and yards, ensure there is suitable means of escape from fire and fire devices e.g. mains linked smoke detectors, and ensure all fixtures and fittings are safe within the letable room. A copy of this can be downloaded from www.opsi.gov.uk.

If your property is being rented out as a HMO then please contact us.

If your property is a 2 storey house; a maisonette on the ground and first floor; or a flat then contact Stan Tite on 01702 215002 ext 5830.

If your property is a 3 storey house, has a converted attic or basements; is a maisonette on the first and second floors, then contact Clare Sheridan on 01702 215002 ext 5818 or Sarah Scotchmer on 01702 215002 ext 5412. Your property may require a property licence which can be discussed further with the above Officers.
How long do you think it takes to process a claim for Housing Benefit?

1 month?

1 week?

How does 1 day sound?

Introducing Fast Tracking

If an application is provided with the 7 essential items that make the application complete, the claim will be processed and a decision made within 1 working day!

Just ensure your tenant provides the following:

1. Fully completed claim form
2. Proof of identity for claimant, and for partner (if applicable)
3. Proof of National Insurance Number, and partners (if applicable)
4. Proof of all income and proof of partner’s income (if applicable)
5. Proof of income for anyone else residing in the home
6. Proof of all bank accounts, savings, investments and capital
7. Proof of rent

The Fast Tracking service immediately had a positive impact upon our processing times and over the last two years Fast Track claims have become a sizeable chunk of the claims that we process.

We have now started to advertise this already popular service throughout the borough.

Looking for advice about benefits?

Our website has recently been updated and contains the answers to many questions about Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

Check out the Landlords section of the website for information on claiming benefits aimed specifically at helping landlords with their tenants.

View the latest LHA rates online. www.southend.gov.uk If you have any comments regarding the benefits section of the website please e-mail benefits@southend.gov.uk

“Working Together to Have your Say”
In 2005/06 16 people died from Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which had not been properly installed or maintained.

Many other people also suffered ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with many other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess poisonous CO gas is produced.

SAFETY OF GAS APPLIANCES

As a landlord, you are required by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that an annual safety check is carried out by a tradesman who is Gas Safe registered.

You MUST keep a record of these safety checks and you MUST issue a record to your tenant with 28 days of each annual check.

Failure to maintain your gas appliances regularly and correctly can lead to a Carbon Monoxide leak.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a chemical compound of carbon and oxygen. It has no colour, taste or smell and is extremely poisonous. Our blood contains a component called haemoglobin which normally absorbs oxygen in our lungs and carries it around the body. When CO is inhaled it prevents absorption of oxygen into the body and can result in oxygen starvation which could lead to DEATH if the concentration level is high enough.

Recognising the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide:

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick and a general lack of energy. The symptoms are often overlooked and confused with the symptoms of flu.

Unlike a lack of oxygen due to choking for example where the body turns blue (cyanosis) severe Carbon Monoxide poisoning turns the body a cherry-red colour and a victim’s skin will be pink and they may look flushed with bright red lips.

Carbon Monoxide is a SILENT KILLER. This is because the gas can affect a person’s mental ability before they are even aware that there is a problem. Any effort that increases the body’s need for oxygen only makes the problem worse and will rapidly lead to collapse and even death.

Spotting the Signs of Carbon Monoxide

You can tell if a gas appliance is working correctly by looking at the flame. If it is bright BLUE it is healthy. If it is YELLOW or ORANGE there is evidence of a possible Carbon Monoxide presence.

Other signs to look for include brownish-yellow stains around the appliance, pilot lights that frequently blow out and condensation in the room where the appliance is installed.

Your tenant’s are at risk of Carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your appliance is poorly installed
- Your appliance is not working properly
- Your appliance has not been safety checked & serviced regularly
- There is not enough fresh air in the room
- Your chimney flue is blocked
- YOU ALLOW ILLEGAL GAS WORKERS TO INSTALL OR MAINTAIN YOUR APPLIANCES
GAS SAFE REGISTERED INSTALLERS

You **MUST** have your gas appliances safety-checked by a GAS SAFE registered installer every year.

GAS SAFE registered installers are gas experts and have undergone extensive training to qualify for registration. **BUT REMEMBER, GAS SAFE** registration does not automatically cover all areas of gas work. Most installers specialise in one area, so check that your installer is qualified to carry out the work you are asking them to do.

You can **CHECK YOUR INSTALLERS STATUS** with the GAS SAFE Customer Services Team (0800 408 5500) or you can look on the reverse of the installer’s GAS SAFE ID card.

**NEVER** allow anyone without a valid GAS SAFE registration number to work on your gas appliances.

AUDIBLE CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

Apart from having your gas appliances safety checked annually, the next best thing you can do is fit a CE-approved audible carbon monoxide alarm. Typically, these cost around £25.00 which is a small price to pay if it saves a life.

Make sure any alarms you buy conform to current British and European safety standards. ‘CE’ and ‘BS’ safety symbols will be clearly displayed on the packaging.

**NEVER BUY AN ALARM THAT DOESN’T CARRY THE ‘CE’ OR ‘BS’ SAFETY MARK**

**ALWAYS CHOOSE AN AUDIBLE ALARM SO TENANTS CAN BE ALERTED EVEN IF ASLEEP.**

DO YOUR TENANT’S KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND IF THEY SMELL GAS?

It is good practice to provide emergency information to your tenants – do you include this in your tenancy pack?

The type of information you should consider providing is this:

*If you smell gas then call: 0800 111 999 (England, Scotland and Wales)*

- **If you are calling from a mobile phone then GO OUTSIDE FIRST**
- **Do NOT smoke**
- **Do NOT turn light switches on**
- **Do NOT do anything to create a spark**

*If you do NOT need to switch on a light to do so:*

- **Turn off** the supply at the meter &
- **Open** doors and windows and wait outside for the emergency engineer to arrive

Anyone who appears to be suffering from the effects of gas inhalation must be removed from the contaminated area, placed in the open air and given oxygen if available. Keep them rested and avoid exertion.

**WHY DON’T YOU STICK THE ABOVE INFORMATION ON A LABEL NEAR YOUR BOILER?**

The Health and Safety Executive are the enforcing body for gas safety. As a responsible Authority, Southend Borough Council will not hesitate to report any notified cases of gas safety check lapses in privately rented accommodation.

Contact details for The Health and Safety Executive will be provided to any tenant requesting assistance in dealing with disrepair to gas appliances which are the responsibility of the landlord.

“Working Together to Have your Say”
Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

A number of you may already be aware of our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme and the fact that, to date, we have been unable to furnish you with any official written information. In order to rectify this we are in the process of putting together a leaflet that can either be mailed out or accessed via the internet.

Below you will find a draft copy that we intend to include and would appreciate you spending a couple of moments reading this through in order to identify whether or not we have addressed all of the questions you may have. If we’ve missed anything or you have any other comments to make, we would welcome your input by contacting The Private Sector Tenancy Officer:

Chris Horsley, on 01702 215002 ext 4319 or e-mail to chrishorsley@southend.gov.uk.

A GUIDE TO RENT AND DEPOSIT LOAN SCHEME (LANDLORDS)

What is the Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme?
It is a scheme set up by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is aimed at people who need to rent a home in the private sector but are unable to raise the funds needed to cover the rent in advance and damage deposit normally asked for by private landlords. The loan is interest free and is paid back by affordable monthly repayments which we agree with each individual.

Who can apply?
Anyone homeless or threatened with homelessness who can show that they would not be able to secure a rented home without financial help and are found eligible for assistance by the council’s Housing Options Team. The loans relate to Assured Shorthold Tenancies of at least twelve months. In cases where single applicants are under the age of 25, we may consider applications involving renting from a resident landlord (lodgings), but this will be done on a case by case basis.

How does it work for Landlords?
• A Private Sector Tenancy Officer will visit your property and carry out a simple inspection. Photographs will be taken at that time.
• Rental potential, monthly rental and payment options will be discussed.
• Tenants will be put forward to the landlord for consideration.
• Once a suitable tenant has been found the landlord should advise the Council of his decision.
• Southend Council will agree the Loan with the tenant and a cheque, made payable to the landlord, drawn up, representing one month rental and an additional month deposit.
• Upon receipt of the cheque the landlord will grant a 12-month tenancy.

Notes:
• All properties should be unfurnished but be carpeted/ have suitable floor coverings.
• We would suggest that the landlord supply either a gas or electric cooker fitted by a recognised engineer thus ensuring that safety regulations have been adhered to.
• A current Gas Safety Certificate is required and this will need to be updated on an annual basis.
• A visual pre-tenancy electrical safety inspection is required and a full electrical test commissioned where necessary (it is recommended to carry out a periodic electrical test every 5 years)
• Property to have suitably sited smoke detector(s) one to each floor.
• If more convenient, we would suggest that the landlord take out a basic service contract with a service company such as British Gas, thus ensuring that inspections, services, call-outs are automatically covered.
• A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required.
• The landlord is responsible for Building Insurance & the tenant responsible for Contents Insurance.
• Prior to the tenant moving in, the landlord should take meter readings & advise utilities of change of name. For ease of transition, a list should be provided giving names, addresses & contact numbers of those utility companies. If key meters are fitted, then keys to be available on move-in day.
• Unless otherwise indicated on the Tenancy Agreement, the tenant is responsible for all utility bills, Council Tax, water rates, TV licence, et cetera.
It is important to ensure that all electrical appliances and fittings within the rented property are safe and in good working order. Unlike gas regulations, there is no law that says you must have a landlord electrical safety certificate. But, should any electrical fittings or appliances within your rental property cause harm to a tenant you could be held liable under the landlord’s ‘duty of care’. Basically a portable appliance is anything with a plug that fits into a 13amp socket. The obvious things to look for are frayed wires, scorched plug tops, cracked plugs or sockets and most importantly correct fuses. The tenant could sue you for damages, or worse you may be brought before a court for negligence under the regulations.

We recommend landlords carry out the following:

- Annual visual inspections by the landlord or agent - recording this on a safety checklist,
- Inspections on tenant change-overs, recording electrical equipment, its condition and fuses fitted
- Periodic inspections of electrical equipment by a qualified electrician.
- 5 yearly inspections by a qualified electrician to ensure safety and that the electrical system complies with current electrical regulations.
- Keep all records of these inspections.

Size of Fuses?

If no-one can remember schoolboy physics to find the correct fuse divide the wattage of the appliance by 240.e.g. 3000 watt kettle equals 3000 ÷ 240 = 12.5 amps.

Fuses come in 3, 5 and 13amps and it is quite dangerous to have a higher rated fuse than necessary. The following is a guide on fuse sizes required depending on the power of the appliance in Watts.

- Use a 3amp fuse in plugs attached to appliances up to 700 Watts
- Use a 5amp fuse in plugs attached to appliances from 700 to 1200 Watts
- Use a 13amp fuse in plugs attached to appliances from 1200 to 3000 Watts

Nothing will stop tenants putting in wrong fuses so a check before each let would be sensible.

I think it would be a long time before it becomes mandatory for the simple reason that most lets are ‘unfurnished’ with a minimum of appliances and there would be more risk involved in the tenants own appliances than anything supplied by landlords.

“Working Together to Have your Say”
The Thames Gateway South Essex PLACE Scheme

Do you have a property that has been empty for some time? Would you like it repaired, renovated and let?

Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Councils are collaborating as part of the Thames Gateway PLACE Scheme in conjunction with Pathmeads Housing Association to bring empty homes back into use.

The scheme is designed to assist owners in bringing empty properties back into use. The Loan is for a maximum of £20,000. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council are particularly interested in 2 to 3 bedroom properties.

The scheme is a partnership between you the owner, Southend on Sea Borough Council and Pathmeads who will manage and maintain your home.

As a condition we will only accept properties that the owner is prepared to let at no more than the weekly local housing allowance level.

In Southend-on-Sea this is approximately £115.38 per week for a one-bedroom property, £150.00 per week for a two-bedroom property and £230.77 per week for a four-bedroom property. The up to date figures are available on the Council’s web site at: www.southend.gov.uk and type local housing allowance into the search field.

If you are interested in the scheme Pathmeads will inspect the property and tell you how much it will cost to renovate. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will fund the renovation costs based on the works conducted by Pathmeads. We would be looking for a five-year lease agreement with you. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will confirm the rent level that is acceptable. Once the lease is signed between all parties work will commence.

When ready to let Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will refer a tenant to occupy the property. No interest is charged on the loan. Pathmeads act as the landlord and will charge a management and maintenance fee as part of the rent. At the end of the lease the property will be returned to you ready to let, sell or occupy yourself.

If you would like more information on the scheme itself then please contact Stuart Burrell:

Southend Borough Council’s Empty Homes Officer on 01702 215002 ext 4363

Email emptyprop@southend.gov.uk

If you would more information on Pathmeads then please contact:

Hasmita Bhojani on 020 8900 4722

Email landlords@pathmeads.org.uk or visit their website at www.pathmeads.org.uk

“Working Together to Have your Say”