

MINUTES OF BROXBOURNE LANDLORDS' FORUM

Wednesday 18 April 2018

Present: Stephen Tingley, Norna Duncan, Lorraine Legrys, Alison Bannister, Aleyne Fontanelle – Borough of Broxbourne
Adam Male – Urban.co.uk
Matthew Oliver – National Landlords Association
+ over 15 landlords and letting agents

Stephen Tingley, Broxbourne Council's Head of Housing and Benefits, welcomed everyone.

Homelessness Reduction Act

There was a presentation by Stephen Tingley from Broxbourne Borough Council on the Homelessness Reduction Act in the private rented sector. The aim of the HRA is to ensure local authorities (LAs) intervene at earlier stages to try to prevent homelessness and assist those already experiencing homelessness to access the help they need irrespective of whether they have a priority need. It came into effect in April 2018 and there will be new burdens on all LAs as well as additional data requirements to be collected around each household that LAs assist. The Act will also ensure that other agencies, e.g. NHS, Probation Services, mental health services, refer homeless households or those at risk of homelessness to LA housing teams. Households will receive more targeted and tailored advice and will be expected to engage with the LA and take steps to try to resolve their situation.

General Data Protection Regulation

Next, there was a presentation by Adam Male from Urban.co.uk on the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the implications for landlords and tenants. The GDPR represents significant changes to how data is handled under the current Data Protection Act. These changes include requiring organisations to:

- document what personal data they hold, where it came from and who they share it with
- review current privacy notices and put a plan in place for making any necessary changes
- check their procedures to ensure they cover all the rights that individuals have, including how they would delete personal data
- update their procedures and plan how to handle subject access requests (an individual's right to access their personal data held by an organisation) within the new timescales
- demonstrate the legal basis for collection and processing of personal data

The GDPR will introduce larger penalties for data breaches than are currently in place. The current maximum fine is £500,000 but organisations could be fined up to 4% of annual worldwide turnover or up to €20 million (whichever is higher). Fines will be levied by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). It is highly recommended that landlords register with the ICO as it can provide useful advice and guidance to ensure compliance with GDPR. The changes come into effect on 25 May 2018 and will remain in force even when the UK leaves the EU.

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Industry news and a legislative update

The final presentation was by Matthew Oliver from the NLA on industry news and a legislative update including the GDPR mentioned above. The NLA work closely with and actively lobby the Government to try and ensure national policy that affects private landlords and their tenants is fair. The NLA provides advice, support and information to keep private landlords up to date with legislative changes in the housing sector. It also provides courses for landlords to develop their professional skills and offers a landlord accreditation scheme. There are regular events held for landlords often in partnership with local authorities. Further information can be found on the NLA's website: <https://landlords.org.uk/>

Any other business

Aleyne Fontanelle, Broxbourne Council's Environmental Health Manager, gave a talk on the new regulations surrounding Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The new regulations will extend the scope of mandatory HMO licensing to try and ensure living standards in HMOs are standardised across the country. For further information please contact our Environmental Health team at: envhealth@broxbourne.gov.uk

All the presentations can be viewed on the Council's website:
<http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/resident-housing/landlords-forum>

The Forum finished with Stephen Tingley thanking the speakers and everyone for attending.

Date of next meeting: October 2018