



## Winter Newsletter

January 2024

Dear Landlord / Agent,

Keep up to date on private rented sector (PRS) news, including:

- An increase in Local Housing Allowance rates
- Plans for a new Welsh registration scheme for visitor accommodation, and
- Getting the right electrical testing certificates.

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| Welsh Government

**Working together**

**for a safe home for all**

### Renting Homes: Legislation updates

On the 6 December 2023, the Welsh Government made some minor amendments to the Renting Homes (Wales) legislation. These amendments have been made to ensure clarity and consistency with the interpretation of the law.

## What does this mean for you?

Although you can read the amendments [here](#), the main points to note are that some terminology and wording in the model written statement (and included explanatory information) and prescribed form RHW17 have changed.

There should be no need to re-issue any current written statements, but you should use the correct version going forward to provide clarity for you and your contract-holders. Avoid using locally stored documents and always download the most up-to-date versions from the Welsh Government website to ensure you are complying with the law.

Click below for the latest Renting Homes contracts and forms.

Model contracts

Prescribed forms



## Local Housing Allowance: Rates to be increased from the 1st of April

Local Housing Authority (LHA) rates are used to calculate Housing Benefit and

Universal Credit payments for tenants renting from private landlords. Welsh Government has been calling on the UK Government to raise LHA rates, which have been frozen at 2020 levels, in view of the cost-of-living crisis and impacts on both tenants and landlords.

LHA rates will increase on the 1st of April by 16.56% on average in Wales. You can find the new rates for your area [here](#).

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## Leasing Scheme Wales: What are the benefits?

Leasing Scheme Wales is a Welsh Government backed scheme where participating local authorities can manage private rented property on behalf of the owner. The scheme may offer a good option for property owners who do not want to sell but don't want the administrative responsibility of being an active landlord.

### There are key advantages for owners:

- For leases of between 5-20 years, the Local Authority becomes the landlord for the duration of the lease. This means there is no need for a private landlord to be registered or licensed with Rent Smart Wales during this period.
- Rental payments are guaranteed (even if the property is void) at the new Local Housing Allowance rate.

- Grants of up to £5000 may be available to bring properties up to an agreed standard, and a further £5000 to increase the EPC rating towards EPC C. This funding could be extended to a maximum of £30,000 for empty properties.
- Maintenance and safety certificate inspections are covered.
- Repairs of any damage to the property made by tenants is covered.
- Appropriate support for tenants throughout the lifetime of the lease is guaranteed.

More information will be available from your local authority.

[Find my local authority](#)

| Tourism



## Visitor accommodation: Regulation confirmed for Wales

The Welsh Government has announced plans to implement a registration and licensing scheme for all visitor accommodation in Wales. A rise in online booking platforms has brought benefits, but also concerns about the pressures short-term lets have on housing and surrounding communities.

The scheme is intended to provide visitors with confidence that they are renting a safe property which meets all required standards and ensure that the use of the property does not have an antisocial impact on the neighbourhood.

It is hoped the scheme will have a positive impact on the growing sector and lead to less disparity in approach between private rented sector and holiday let market regulation.

[Read more](#)

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| Business Information



## Electrical certificates: What you need to know

The Renting Homes Act has made it a requirement for landlords who rent their property on an occupation contract to produce an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). The work must be undertaken by a qualified electrician and a copy of the report must be provided to contract-holders. Most certificates are valid for 5 years (the maximum period allowed under the law), but it may be for less so you must note the renewal date.

These EICRs are not to be confused with Electrical Installation Certificates (EICs) or

a Minor Electrical Works Certificate – all three of these documents have different meanings and uses. Landlords must provide an EICR unless the property is a new build, in which case an Electrical Installation Certificate will satisfy the requirements.

## How do you know if your electrician is qualified?

You can search for electricians who are qualified to undertake an electrical safety report on the [Registered Competent Person website](#).

Note: It is not a legal requirement for electricians to be listed on this register, and so if they cannot be located, ask them to provide evidence of qualifications and adequate insurance.

### When an EICR is carried out, landlords should ensure:

- The report states it is an Electrical Installation Condition Report. Do not accept an EIC unless the property is a new build.
  - The contractor is qualified to complete the work.
  - The EICR is valid, has been correctly filled in, and has been signed and dated.
  - That the overall assessment of the electrical installation is satisfactory.
  - Where the installation is unsatisfactory, the required improvement work has been undertaken and written confirmation of what remedial works has been done is provided.
  - A copy of the EICR has been given to the contract-holder(s) within 14 days of their occupation date, or the date of the inspection if after the occupation date. The same applies to written confirmation of remedial works.
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## Radon: How harmful is it and what can be done to manage it?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can seep into homes from the ground. It is not possible to detect it, either in the air or the water, without testing and measurement. Radon gas is one source of radiation in the home and can cause lung cancer. The risk increases with higher dose and duration of exposure.

To make sure that you and your tenants are properly protected, follow these simple steps:

1. Check – Is your property in a radon affected area? Use [UKradon's interactive map](#).
2. Measure – If you are in an affected area, test to determine the actual radon level. You can hire a professional radon testing service or [purchase a DIY radon testing kit](#).
3. Act – If the radon level is in excess you should [take steps to reduce it](#).

Don't forget: It is a landlord's obligation to ensure their dwelling is fit for human habitation. Radiation is one of the 29 hazards that should be considered when making this fitness assessment.

Reviewing the resources available could put your mind at ease and ensure

that the risk to your tenant does not exceed permitted levels.

UKradon

| Consultations



## Have your say: Could the PRS benefit from greater transparency of land ownership?

UK Government is seeking your views on improving the access to information held on land ownership, particularly when trusts are involved in the ownership structure.

Currently, His Majesty's Land Registry (HMLR) records on a public register the legal owners of land. But it does not record the details of any companies or trustees behind the legal owner who may be able to control, or derive economic benefit from, that land.

The government hopes greater transparency in the PRS will help to tackle rogue landlords who disguise property ownership through complex ownership structures. A more transparent system would allow local authorities to more easily identify these landlords and enforce against them.

The deadline to respond to the consultation is 21st February 2024.



View and respond



## Conwy: Local Housing Market Assessment out for public consultation

Conwy County Borough Council invites you to read their draft Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2022-2037 and share your comments.

Local Authorities need to have a thorough understanding of their local housing market and a strong evidence base on which to make decisions about future housing supply. This is in terms of both market and affordable housing delivery, number of bedrooms required, and affordable housing tenure.

To provide feedback, you can answer a questionnaire or attend one of the drop-in sessions below. You have until 11th March 2024 to respond.

Drop-in sessions:

Conwy - Monday 5th February 2024

Colwyn Bay - Tuesday 13th February 2024

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| Student Lets



## Accommodation needed: Wrexham University Student Pad

Did you know that Wrexham University has over 9000 students? Most need to find a home off campus and the demand for accommodation is growing.

Private landlords have an opportunity to tap into this market by advertising their property on the Student Pad database. For further information please click below or contact [accommodation@wrexham.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@wrexham.ac.uk).

Read more

Student Pad

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# Looking for Events in your local area?

See a list of upcoming landlord forums, workshops and more by visiting our website.

[View events](#)

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