

Dear Landlord

Research into the Private Rented Sector in North Staffordshire

The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University, has been commissioned by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and local authority partners in North Staffordshire, to examine the private rented sector in the area. We are particularly interested in exploring the impact of the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme. As part of this research we are conducting a short survey of landlords which explores their experiences of being a landlord and their views about landlord accreditation schemes. **We are interested in the views of both Members and Non-members of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.**

I would therefore be very grateful if you could spare **ten minutes** to complete the attached questionnaire and return it to us by email or post by **Monday 7 December 2009**.

Email to: stephen.green@shu.ac.uk

Post to: Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research
Sheffield Hallam University
Unit 10 Science Park
City Campus
SHEFFIELD S1 1WB

Please note that in line with the Data Protection Act 1998, all your answers will be treated in **strict confidence** and no one will be able to identify you or your views from the research.

As a small 'thank you' for taking part, completion of the survey makes you eligible for entry in a free to enter **prize draw** where the winner will receive a **£100 B&Q voucher**. If you would like to enter this draw, simply complete the entry form overleaf and return it along with your completed questionnaire by the 7th December 2009. One lucky winner will be drawn out of the hat. The winner of the Prize Draw will be notified by 22 December 2009.

Thank you very much for your help. Your time and input are very much appreciated. Please contact me if you wish to know more about the project.

Yours sincerely



Dr Paul Hickman
Director of the Sheffield Hallam University Research Team

PRIZE DRAW ENTRY FORM

To enter the free prize draw to win a £100 B&Q voucher, please complete the following form and return it with your completed questionnaire.

I wish to be entered into the prize draw

Name:

Address:

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Telephone Number:

Email:

Your details are confidential and are protected under the Data Protection Act (1998). They will not be passed to a third party and will be destroyed on completion of this research project.

Survey of Private Landlords in North Staffordshire

Instructions

1. If you wish to email us your responses, please insert a 'Y' next to your answer.
2. For the purposes of this survey the *North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme* is referred to as the *Accreditation Scheme*.

The information you provide will be processed by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University. Everything you tell us will be **completely confidential and anonymous**. In line with the Data Protection Act 1998, the information you provide will not be passed on to anyone else and will not be used to identify you. If you have any concerns about how we use your information or queries about the survey more broadly please contact Dr. Stephen Green on 0114 225 3073 or stephen.green@shu.ac.uk.

Section A: About You, Your Properties and Your Tenants

This section should be completed by ALL landlords.

1. **How long have you been a landlord?** (tick one box only)
 - Less than 12 months
 - 1-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - More than ten years
2. **Would you describe yourself as a part-time or a full-time landlord?** (tick one box only)
 - Full-time landlord (i.e. a full-time job, or a company whose main business is letting residential accommodation)
 - Part-time landlord (i.e. not a full-time job)
3. **Where are the properties that you rent out?** (tick all that apply)
 - Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
 - Stafford Borough Council
 - Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
 - Stoke-on-Trent City Council
 - Outside these four areas

4. In total, how many rental properties do you have? (tick one box only)

- 1
- 2 to 5
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 20
- 21 to 30
- 31 to 40
- More than 40

5. What type of properties do you have? (tick all that apply)

- Flats
- Terraced houses
- Semi-detached houses
- Detached houses
- HMOs (House in Multiple Occupation)
- Other, please specify.....

6. Who do you mainly let your properties to? (tick all that apply)

- Families
- Single People
- Professionals
- Migrant workers
- Students
- Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance (LHA) claimants
- Other, please specify.....

7. Do you manage your properties by yourself or do you use a managing agent? (tick one box only)

- I manage properties by myself
- A managing agent does some tasks
- A managing agent does all tasks

8. Are you a member of a Landlord Association or similar organisation? (tick one box only)

- No
- Yes, please tell us which one(s)

9. How much do you expect to pay on repairs and maintenance per property each year?

£

10. Do you have a planned programme of maintenance and improvement for your properties? (tick one box only)

- Yes
- No

11. How familiar are you with the following?

	Very familiar	Fairly familiar	Not familiar
The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The National Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy Performance Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting People	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gas Safety Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Renew North Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 21 Notices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assured Shorthold Tenancies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Do you have any properties that have been empty for 6 months or more? (tick one box only)

- Yes NOW GO TO QUESTION 13
- No NOW GO TO QUESTION 14
- Don't know NOW GO TO QUESTION 14

13. What is the main reason that you have empty property? (tick one box only)

- Difficulty finding a suitable tenant
- The property is undergoing repair or refurbishment
- I don't want to let the property at this time
- I cannot afford to bring the property up to a 'lettable' standard at present
- The property is up for sale
- Other, please specify.....

14. There are various reasons why people become landlords. Which of the following do you regard as the MAIN reason for you? (tick one box only)

- I became a landlord without meaning to: I inherited a property or could not sell one
- To secure a good return on my investment / to provide an income
- To provide housing for a relative / friend
- I enjoy managing and letting property
- I would rather invest in property than in other opportunities
- I prefer to have some investment in property
- It is part of my retirement plan
- I believe that landlords perform an important function in meeting housing needs
- Other, please specify.....

15. Which of the following approaches have you successfully used to find tenants for your properties? (tick all that apply)

- Advertisement in a local newspaper
- Through an Estate Agent or Managing Agent
- Advertisement on the Accreditation Scheme website
- Advertisement on another website
- Advertisement in Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Home Line magazine
- Referral from a University Accreditation Scheme
- Referral from another agency or local authority department
- Word of Mouth
- Other, please specify.....

16. How difficult is it to rent out your properties in North Staffordshire? (tick one box only)

- Very Difficult
- Difficult
- Neither difficult or easy
- Easy
- Very Easy

17. Thinking about your plans for your properties in North Staffordshire over the next two years, which of the following statements most applies to you? (tick one box only)

- I am likely to increase my property portfolio
- I am likely to decrease my property portfolio
- I am likely to dispose of all my properties
- My property portfolio is likely to remain the same
- Don't know

18. What is the main reason for this?

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Section B: About the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme

This section should be completed by ALL landlords.

19. Are you aware of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme? (tick one box only)

- Yes
- No

20. Are you currently a member of the Accreditation Scheme? (tick one box only)

- Yes NOW GO TO QUESTION 24
- No NOW GO TO QUESTION 21

21. Why are you not a member of the Accreditation Scheme? (tick all that apply)

- I don't know enough about the Scheme
- It offers insufficient benefits
- I don't want to share details of my business with the local authority
- I am a successful landlord and don't need the Scheme
- I don't need the Scheme to improve the condition of my properties
- I don't need the Scheme to find suitable tenants
- I don't want someone else interfering in my business
- I use other sources for help, advice and support
- Other, please specify.....

22. Have you ever been a member of the Accreditation Scheme? (tick one box only)

- Yes NOW GO TO QUESTION 23
- No NOW GO TO QUESTION 24

23. Could you briefly tell us why you are no longer a member?

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24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Accredited landlords provide a better service to their tenants than non-accredited landlords	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Properties provided by accredited landlords are better than those provided by non-accredited landlords	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accredited landlords are more knowledgeable about the roles and responsibilities associated with being a landlord than non-accredited landlords	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The standard of privately-rented accommodation in North Staffs has improved in the past 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Accreditation Scheme has helped to improve the standard of privately rented accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

25. Of the following list, what do you consider are the THREE MAIN BENEFITS to becoming a member of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme?
(Rank your three main reasons 1, 2 and 3 in order of preference)

Access to Grants to help with the costs of repair and refurbishment of privately rented properties	
Information about the private rented sector (e.g. new government legislation)	
Better access to other Local Authority departments (e.g. the Housing Benefits department)	
Free advertisement of rented properties in the Council's Home Line magazine	
Advertising vacant properties on the Accreditation Scheme website	
Access to discounts from particular tradesmen and services	
Access to training / professional development events	
Meetings with landlords and local authorities to discuss issues	
A quarterly Newsletter to provide information and advice to landlords	
The Accreditation Scheme's website (landlordaccreditation.co.uk)	
Use of the Accreditation Scheme Logo	
Better access to potential tenants	
Recognition that you are a good landlord	

26. Are there other benefits that would encourage you to become (or remain) a member of the Accreditation Scheme?

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Section C: Being a Member of the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme
This section should be completed by members of the Accreditation Scheme ONLY. Non-members, please go to Section D.

27. Do you feel that membership of the Accreditation Scheme has helped you to become a better landlord? (tick one box only)

- Yes: definitely
- Yes: probably
- No
- Don't know

28. Do your tenants know that you are a member of the Accreditation Scheme? (tick one box only)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

29. Please can you explain why this is the case.

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30. How useful have the following Accreditation Scheme services been to you?

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Never used
Free letting adverts in Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Home Line magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letting adverts on the Accreditation Scheme website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discounts from tradesmen and on other services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information about the private rented sector (e.g. new government legislation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to training / professional development events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meetings with landlords and local authorities to discuss issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The quarterly Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Scheme's website (landlordaccreditation.co.uk)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advice and assistance from officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

31. How important is it that the Accreditation Scheme organises professional development courses (i.e. training courses) for its members? (tick one box only)

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Not important

32. Would you support the idea of an Enhanced Membership for members who successfully complete professional development courses? (tick one box only)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

33. If the Accreditation Scheme was to charge a small membership fee, would you remain a member? (tick one box only)

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, probably
- I'm not sure, I would review my membership of the Scheme
- No, I would probably leave
- No, I would definitely leave

Section D: Monitoring Information

This section should be completed by ALL landlords. The information you provide will help us to build an overall picture of who has responded to the survey. It will not be used to identify individuals.

34. Are you?

- Male
- Female

35. How old were you on your last birthday?

- 16-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-64 years old
- 65 or older

36. How would you describe your ethnicity? (tick one box only)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White British | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British- Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British- Caribbean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British- African |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White and Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British- Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White and Black African | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White and Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Somali |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Yemeni |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British- Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy or Traveller |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British- Pakistani | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group (Please state) |
| | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British- Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Refused to say |

Section E: Your Final Thoughts

37. Finally, if you have any other comments about any of the issues raised in this survey, please write them in the space below.

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Please turn over

Would you like to talk to us about your experiences of being a Landlord?

As part of this study, Sheffield Hallam University would like to speak to a number of landlords in the area. If you would be prepared to speak to us or take part in a workshop with other landlords, please provide your contact details below. Please note that all your answers to this survey are treated with strict confidence, and the data will not be used in a way that enables anybody to identify you personally.

Name:.....

Address:
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Telephone Number:

Email:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Please return this questionnaire by Monday 7th December 2009.

If you would like to have the chance of winning a £100 B&Q voucher, please complete the Prize Draw Entry form on the back of the letter that came with this questionnaire and post it to us along with your questionnaire.

For further information about the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme please visit the Scheme’s website (www.landlordaccreditation.co.uk) or contact William Knight on 01782 234019 or william.knight@stoke.gov.uk.