

INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHEME



**North Staffordshire
Landlord Accreditation Scheme**

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1. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHEME

Private landlords play an essential role in the provision of accommodation across North Staffordshire. It is acknowledged and appreciated that many private landlords provide and maintain properties to a good standard, often above the standard required by law. It is important to recognise these landlords and encourage and support others to achieve this higher standard. This is the reason for developing the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme (the Scheme).

The Scheme is run as a partnership between the Scheme Operators, which include:

- Stoke-on-Trent City Council;
- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council;
- Stafford Borough Council;
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council; and the
- North Staffordshire Landlord Association.

The aims of the Scheme are:

- To operate a scheme that promotes good physical conditions of properties and good management practices.
- To create and maintain a stock of private rented accommodation to an accredited standard and which meets the legal requirements.
- To give public recognition to those landlords who provide housing that meets or exceeds the accredited standard.
- To give prospective tenants the choice of renting a good standard of accommodation.

The Scheme requires that landlords meet their legal responsibilities and that the physical condition of properties, basic amenities and management practices are fair and reasonable and will not be prejudicial to the health, safety or welfare of tenants or the surrounding neighbourhood.

This ensures that landlords, tenants and the local community will benefit from good housing conditions, competent management and considerate neighbourly behaviour. It will also help to ensure that misunderstandings and disputes are minimised and if they do occur, are helped to be resolved as quickly as possible.

Participants of the Scheme must ensure compliance with their legal obligations as well as the requirements of the Scheme.

2. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING ACCREDITED?

- Recognition that you are a landlord providing a good standard of accommodation.
- Market advantage when letting a property
- Free advertisement and promotion of your vacant properties on the Scheme's website.
- Discounted landlord training events.
- Access to discounts from local participating companies.
- Improved access to other local authority departments and services, for instance, Housing Benefits, Grants.
- Co-operation, support and advice from the Scheme Operators on all aspects of private renting.
- Provision of a membership card, a certificate and Scheme logo stickers to help promote and provide proof of your membership to the Scheme.

3. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO TENANTS?

- Greater information about properties available for renting.
- Identification of good quality accommodation.
- Assurance that the landlord has signed up to the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme.
- Confidence that your landlord is professional and reputable.
- Provision of a tenant's information booklet.

4. WHO CAN BECOME AN ACCREDITED LANDLORD?

This is a voluntary scheme available to any private landlord who owns and rents out properties in at least one of the four participating local authority areas (as listed on page 2), whether they are locally based or not.

It does not include Council owned properties or those owned by Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations).

5. HOW DO LANDLORDS BECOME ACCREDITED?

To participate in the Scheme, landlords must supply the following:

- A completed and signed Application Form.
- Details of all the properties they rent out within the four participating local authority areas.
- A copy of the current Gas Safety Certificate(s) for all the properties listed on the Property Register (where applicable).

Accreditation will be given where a landlord meets the criteria of the Scheme. This will involve ensuring, as far as reasonably possible, that the landlord is responsible, competent and suitable to be a member of the Scheme. Successful applicants' details will be held on a register and updated periodically by the Scheme Operators.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing, including the reasons for this decision.

Note. There is no joining fee at this time, however, this may be reviewed in the future.

6. PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

The list of properties that you submit will be held by the Scheme. You will be asked to provide access to a random sample of your properties for the purpose of inspection to ensure that they meet the current legal standard and are compliant with the Scheme requirements.

If it is identified that a property is not fully compliant with the required criteria, you may then be allowed a reasonable time limit to undertake the necessary works to upgrade the dwelling. Any necessary works will be highlighted in an agreed Property Improvement Plan.

7. HOW LONG WILL ACCREDITATION LAST FOR?

Your initial accredited status will last for two years.

At the end of this period, you will be invited to renew your membership. Renewed memberships will then last for three further years.

8. SCHEME CRITERIA

To join the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme, landlords will have to sign a declaration stating that they have:

- No conviction for illegal eviction or harassment of tenants in the last seven years.
- No conviction for violence towards any persons in the last seven years.
- No conviction for mortgage, Housing Benefit or Council Tax fraud or breach of grant conditions within the last three years.
- No failings to comply with any statutory notice or House in Multiple Occupation requirements resulting in prosecution or works being carried out in default in the last three years.
- No conviction for non-compliance of a Planning Enforcement Notice relating to a residential property within the last three years.
- No other convictions which would indicate, to the Scheme Operators, unsuitability of the applicant under this Scheme.

9. BREACHES OF THE SCHEME

A landlord may be suspended from the Scheme where:

- The property has fallen below the required standard.
- The landlord contravenes the management code.
- The landlord contravenes the qualifying criteria.
- Any information provided supporting an application was found to be fraudulent or inaccurate.

Any breaches of the Scheme will be referred to a Review Panel. They will consider the nature of the breaches and any representations made by the landlord or any other relevant party. They will then decide on any appropriate action.

The landlord will have a right of appeal against any decision made by the Review Panel.

Landlords who lose their accredited status will no longer be participants of or eligible for any of the benefits of the Scheme.

Note. Accredited landlords who fail to fulfil their Property Improvement Plan without good reason will also be subject to a Review Panel hearing.

10. IMPORTANT NOTES

The Scheme Operators reserve the right at any time to amend the content or operation of this Scheme, subject to consultation with relevant parties. Members of this Scheme agree to comply with and accept that amendments to the content and/or operation of the Scheme can be made by the Scheme Operators subject to consultation with the relevant parties, whereupon members of the Scheme will be notified of any changes.

A full copy of the Scheme's Code of Practice & Standards is provided in the Membership Pack. It can also be found on the website or will be supplied on request.

Adoption of the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme and compliance or non-compliance with the provisions of the Scheme does not affect the statutory rights of people seeking housing.

The Scheme Operators do not have control over the management or condition of the dwellings covered by the Scheme and therefore cannot be held responsible or liable for them.

11. CONTACT DETAILS

The Scheme is centrally administered by the Landlord Accreditation Team at Stoke-on-Trent City Council who may be contacted at:

Tel: **01782 232271 or 232087**

Fax: **01782 232217**

Email: **mail@landlordaccreditation.co.uk**

Mail: **Landlord Accreditation - Housing Standards Team
Stoke-on-Trent City Council
PO Box 634
Civic Centre
Glebe Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 1RJ**

For further information about the Scheme, please go to the Scheme's website at **www.landlordaccreditation.co.uk**

OTHER PARTICIPATING AUTHORITIES DETAILS:

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Tel: Operational Services on 01782 742562 (Ask for Maureen Fraser)

Email: maureen.fraser@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

Stafford Borough Council

Tel: Housing Standards Team on 01785 619000

Email: ehadmin@staffordbc.gov.uk

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Tel: 0845 6053012 ask for Housing Policy & Standards Team

Email: housing.team@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk

The North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme
is a partnership between



Updated March 2009