Welcome to our September edition of the Haringey Landlord Newsletter

Included in this issue are important updates regarding Welfare Reform, proposed additional Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing in Tottenham and changes to waste collection.

If you have any comments about this newsletter or would like us to include any specific articles in future editions please contact privatelettings@haringey.gov.uk

Landlord Forum
Thursday 20 September 2012

Agenda and speakers:
6pm Opening remarks – Phil Harris, Deputy Director Community Housing Services
6:10pm Landlord Consultation on the proposed Additional HMO Licensing Scheme in Tottenham – Presentation by Marta Hardy, Senior Housing Officer, Shared Housing and Empty Homes Team
6:25pm Energy Efficiency in Private Sector Tenancies – Presentation by John Mathers, Fuel Poverty Officer
6:35pm Questions
6:45pm Welfare Reform and Universal Credit – Presentation by Phil Harris, Deputy Director, Community Housing Services
7:15pm Housing Benefit to Universal Credit

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Welfare Reform and the Introduction of Universal Credit

On 8 March 2012 the Welfare Reform Act received Royal Assent. The Act legislates for the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years. It introduces a wide range of reforms that will deliver the commitment made in the Coalition Agreement and the Queen’s Speech to make the benefits and tax credits systems fairer and simpler by:

The main elements of the Act:

- The introduction of Universal Credit to provide a single streamlined payment that will improve work incentives
- A stronger approach to reducing fraud and error with tougher penalties for the most serious offences
- A new claimant commitment showing clearly what is expected of claimants while giving protection to those with the greatest needs
- Creating a fairer approach to Housing Benefit to bring stability to the market and improve incentives to work
- Driving out abuse of the Social Fund system by giving greater power to local authorities
- Reforming Employment and Support Allowance to make the benefit fairer and to ensure that help goes to those with the greatest need

What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit is a new single payment for people who are looking for work or on a low income. It will help claimants and their families to become more independent and will simplify the benefits system by bringing together a range of working-age benefits into a single streamlined payment.

- Universal Credit will replace income-related JSA, income-related ESA, Income Support (including SMI), Working Tax Credits, Child Tax Credits and Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit will go live nationally in October 2013
- Migration of people already on benefits whose circumstances do not change will start from April 2014 and is planned to be complete by 2017 when 12 to 13 million tax credit and benefit claims will have been transformed into 8 million households receiving Universal Credit by 2017

How is Universal Credit calculated?

Universal Credit is made up of a standard allowance and potentially five elements. These are:

- Child Element / Disabled Child Additions
- Childcare Element
- Carer Element
- Limited Capability for Work Element
- Housing Element

Universal Credit will be paid on a monthly basis direct to the claimant.

The Benefit Cap

In April 2013 a cap will be introduced on the total amount of benefit that working-age claimants can receive so that households on out-of-work benefits will no longer receive more in benefit than the average weekly wage, after tax and national insurance.

Initially the cap will be applied by local authorities via housing benefit. From October 2013 it will be applied for all new claims to Universal Credit including those migrated from existing benefits. The total level of entitlement to welfare benefits is to be limited to £500 a week for a couple and lone parents and £350 a week for single households.

To increase the incentives to work, households entitled to Working Tax Credit will be excluded from the benefit cap as well as those where a household member is on disability living allowance. Those on pension credit are also exempt. There is also a nine month grace period if a claimant loses their job.
Proposed designation of an Additional Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) scheme in Tottenham

Tottenham is comprised of predominantly small Victorian properties, many of which have been converted into HMOs in response to an increased need for cheaper privately rented accommodation, a need which is set to grow following the Government benefit caps.

Most of these properties are not covered by mandatory HMO licensing, although they often pose similar problems to tenants and neighbours alike.

Over half of all complaints received by the council in respect of private sector housing are received from tenants or residents living within the N17 and N15 postal areas of the borough.

Additional licensing can help where a local authority consider that a large percentage of non-mandatory licensable HMOs in an area are being managed badly, and that this is causing problems for the tenants of those HMOs or is having a detrimental effect on the neighbourhood in some way.

In this area it is proposed to extend licensing to include:

- All bedsit or ‘shared house’ type HMOs which are occupied by three or more persons in two or more households, irrespective of the number of storeys within the HMO (includes flats in multiple occupation)
- Pre-1991 Building Regulations conversions into self-contained units, but only where the number of units exceeds the number of storeys and only where the entire block and all individual units of accommodation within the block are in single ownership
- All HMOs of three or more persons above shops, regardless of type or layout

Wards: Northumberland Park, Bruce Grove, Tottenham Green, Tottenham Hale, Seven Sisters.
To find out more information on licence fees, licence periods and to have your say on what you would like to see included please visit [http://www.haringey.gov.uk/additional-hmo-licensing](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/additional-hmo-licensing).
Changes to Waste Collection Services in Haringey

Haringey Council is making important changes to waste and recycling collection services as part of our commitment to increase recycling, reduce carbon emissions, save tax payers’ money and protect the environment.

There will be no change to the collection service for estates and flats above shops. For everyone else the changes are being rolled out in three phases. We have completed the first and second phases and we will be starting the third phase in late October in the far east of the borough.

We need your help to make sure tenants understand and correctly use the waste services provided for them by Haringey Council. It is in all our interests that we dispose of our waste properly and keep front gardens clean and tidy; this helps to ensure that the street and the overall neighbourhood is kept in an excellent condition. As landords, if waste is not managed responsibly from your properties you may be served with formal notices. With your co-operation we aim to avoid this.

The new waste services are summarised below:

- Continue with **weekly** collection of dry recyclables - plastic bottles, glass, paper, cardboard etc
- Continue with **weekly** collection of all food and garden waste
- We’ll provide a six-month supply of **compostable food waste bags** during the roll-out of service changes *(new)*
- The introduction of a new **240 litre wheelie bin for recycling** (or green sacks where space for bins is restricted) *(new)*
- **FREE** bulky waste collection service for items that can be reused or recycled *(new)*
- **FREE** collection of mattresses *(new)*
- **FORTNIGHTLY** collection of non-recyclable general rubbish *(new)*

Further details and frequently asked questions can be found on our website.

If you have any concerns at all and would like to talk to us please email or phone Emma Davies on Emma.davies@haringey.gov.uk or 020 8489 3573.

If your **tenants** have any questions or queries about waste, please ask them to call the Veolia Contact Centre 020 8885 7700.

Your help is appreciated and will ensure that Haringey is a good place for everyone who live, work and visit the borough.

Let’s all recycle more together!

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North London Housing Benefit Hub Update

The HUB has now seen over 385 cases since February 2012. This includes:

- 230 single people across the six boroughs
- 155 families from Haringey, Enfield and Barnet

Outcomes so far:

- We have prevented homelessness for:
  - 26 single people
  - 33 families

We are working hard with the other households.

Thank you to all the landlords involved.

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Cllr. Nilgun Canver
Cabinet member for the Environment
Haringey Council