

A LANDLORD'S GUIDE TO PRIVATE LETTING



INTRODUCTION TO A LANDLORD'S GUIDE TO PRIVATE LETTING

Welcome to 'A landlord's guide to private letting', which has been produced by Property Information Point for the Greater Norwich area, and is to be used as a quick reference manual for landlords wishing to let out their property.

The Greater Norwich Housing Partnership (GNHP) appreciates the important role that the private rented sector has in providing decent homes, and is committed to providing you with quality information that will aid you in running a successful letting business.

1. Landlord's checklist

1.1 Checklist for all landlords

1.2 Checklist for landlords with HMOs

2. Letting your property

2.1 Starting a tenancy

2.2 Rights and responsibilities

3. Support and advice from council housing advice teams within Greater Norwich

4. Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

5. Help with letting your property

5.1 Private sector leasing schemes

5.2 Accredited Landlord – the landlord accreditation scheme within Greater Norwich

6. Legal requirements under the Housing Act 2004

6.1 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

6.2 Houses in multiple occupation (HMO)

6.3 Decent homes standard

7. Support and advice from council private sector housing teams within Greater Norwich

8. Useful contact list



1. Landlord's checklist

1.1 Checklist for all landlords

1.2 Checklist for landlords with
houses in multiple occupation (HMO)



1. Landlord checklist

1.1. Landlord checklist

These are not all legal requirements but it is in your interest and your prospective tenant(s), that you check the following before you let out your accommodation.

Before you let your property:

1. Get consent from your mortgage lender to let your property if you do not have a buy-to-let mortgage or own your property outright.
2. If you are renting a leasehold property, get permission from the freeholder to let it out.
3. Make sure your buildings and contents insurance is suitable and consider other insurance. For example rent protection and legal protection.
4. Get gas appliances checked and certified by a Gas Safe registered contractor in accordance with gas regulations annually (www.gassaferegister.co.uk).
5. Get an energy performance certificate (EPC)* from an accredited domestic energy assessor, www.hcrregister.com
6. Get the electrics checked and certified by a NAPIT, NICEIC or ELECSA registered electrician.
7. Ensure that all furniture complies with fire safety regulations (look for fire safety labels).
8. Ensure you have the required amount of smoke detectors for your property.
9. Check that the property is reasonably safe from intruders (door and window locks).
10. If you are an overseas landlord, apply for the exemption certificate from the Inland Revenue.
11. Check whether you need a property licence eg a licence if your property is a licensable house in multiple occupation. (HMO)**
12. Check prospective tenant's references are satisfactory.
13. Carry out a basic fire risk assesment¹.

¹ More information on page 27.

At the point of letting:

1. Ensure the property is clean and all instructions and contact details are available.
2. Have a legally binding tenancy agreement that has been agreed and signed by all parties.
3. Prepare an inventory and schedule of condition (it maybe useful to include photographic evidence). This is to be checked, agreed and returned by the tenant within 14 days of occupation.
4. Give the tenant copies of the gas certificate, EPC and electric certificate.
5. Arrange for all meters to be read – but the tenant is responsible for transferring the accounts to their name.
6. Issue a receipt for the first rental payment.
7. Let your local authority know that the council tax should no longer be in your name.
8. Place the deposit (bond) in one of the three tenancy deposit protection schemes and take a receipt for this. You must then send a copy of where the deposit is held, to your tenant.

* From October 2008 it became compulsory for all properties on the rental and sales market to carry out an EPC. These are carried out by an accredited energy assessor. They are designed to give prospective tenants an idea of the running costs of a property and to give recommendations that will help landlords to make their properties as energy efficient as they can be.

** HMOs that require a licence are properties occupied by a group of people who are not a family.

1.2. House in multiple occupation (HMO)* checklist

The regulations (management, fire safety and number of bathrooms and kitchens that need to be supplied) will vary depending on the type of HMO you have and its size and layout.

HMOs can have higher risks than other properties you may let out, so to ensure you are meeting your obligations as a landlord, use this checklist as an initial starting point and check:

- Whether you need planning permission.
- Whether you need to carry out a fire risk assessment under the Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order (although we advise that all landlords carry out a basic assessment).
- Whether you need to supply additional fire precautions.
- Whether there are an adequate number of kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- Whether the kitchen and bathroom facilities are suitably located.
- Whether the property meets management regulation standards.
- Whether you have obtained a licence, if needed.

For basic information on HMOs, including management regulations and licensing, visit the landlord section of: www.propertyinfopoint.co.uk

For HMO amenity standards and fire precautions visit the private sector housing page within the housing pages of: www.norwich.gov.uk**

For planning guidance visit the page, 'Planning – Is planning permission needed?' at www.norwich.gov.uk**

* For more information on HMOs please go to page 27.

**or visit www.broadland.gov.uk or www.south-norfolk.gov.uk

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a set of keys. The hand is positioned in the upper left quadrant, with the thumb and index finger gripping a metal ring. The keys are silver and have a clear plastic cover on the head. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

2. Letting your property

2.1 Starting a tenancy

2.2 Rights and responsibilities

2. Letting your property

2.1. Starting a tenancy

How do I start a tenancy?

Before you let your property it is good practice for you to arrange for an agreement to be drawn up between you and your prospective tenant.

A tenancy agreement is a legal contract (which should be in writing) that sets out the rights and responsibilities of both landlord and tenant. It will contain all relevant details such as the length of the agreement, the rent payable, and what is and isn't allowed in the property.

What types of tenancy agreements are there?

The most common agreement used is an assured shorthold tenancy, which means that:

- you are entitled to a possession order immediately after the initial fixed term has ended (which could be after the minimum six months, providing two months' notice is given). You must also have placed the tenant's deposit in a government authorised tenancy deposit scheme
- you can charge a fair market rent
- you are entitled to a possession order through the courts if your tenant owes you at least two months' or eight weeks' rent providing you have served the correct valid notice.

Other tenancy agreements include assured tenancies, regulated tenancies, excluded and non-excluded tenancies and bare contractual tenancies. With each tenancy agreement your rights and your tenant's rights will differ. More information can be found in the landlords section of www.propertyinfopoint.co.uk

You should consult a copy of the guidance from the Office of Fair Trading website at www.offt.gov.uk to ensure your agreement does not have unfair terms.

Can I let my property if I have a mortgage or if I hold the property on a long lease?

If you do not have a buy-to-let mortgage it is essential to get your mortgage lender's agreement to let the property before you do so. You should also check to ensure that your buildings insurance policy will provide cover if the property is let or empty and make arrangements to extend the cover if it does not.

What about my tax position?

You will be liable to pay tax on your gross income from rents but may be able to deduct from them some of your day to day running expenses for the property. For further details contact your nearest tax office or look at the HM Revenue and Customs website: www.hmrc.gov.uk

Charging deposits and the tenancy deposit law

You may ask the tenant to pay a deposit before moving into your property. This can act as security in case the tenant leaves the property owing rent and/or be used to pay for any damage and/or replace any missing items at the end of the tenancy.

However, since 6 April 2007, at the start of a new tenancy, any rent deposits taken from tenants by landlords or letting agents must be protected by a government authorised tenancy deposit scheme. This will protect both you and the tenant and help resolve any disputes.

For more information visit: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TenancyDeposit

For the schemes available visit:

www.depositprotection.com or call 0844 4727 000,

www.mydeposits.co.uk or call 0844 980 0290 and

www.thedisputeservice.co.uk or call 0845 226 7837.

Should I provide a rent book?

You are only legally obliged to provide a rent book if the rent is payable on a weekly basis. Keep a record of rent payments and/or provide receipts to avoid any disagreements later.

Can joint tenancies be agreed?

Joint tenancies can be agreed with two or more people at the beginning of the tenancy. Each tenant is then responsible jointly and individually for meeting the terms of the tenancy in full, including paying the rent. If one joint tenant leaves the property before the end of the tenancy the remaining tenant(s) will be responsible for paying the full rent. Under a joint tenancy, all tenants have equal rights.

Ending a tenancy

If you have an assured shorthold tenancy you can end the agreement at any time after the first term has finished, or if you have a break clause set within your agreement. You need to give your tenant at least two months' written notice that you want your property back and this needs to be in the form of a section 21 notice, but you still have to apply to the courts for possession if the tenant will not leave. For further information please seek advice from a solicitor, landlord association or contact your local council's housing advice team.

2.2. Rights and responsibilities

On the next page you will find a guide to your legal rights and responsibilities, as well as those of your tenants.

It is important that landlords fully understand their obligations. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Race Relations Act 1976 also apply to anyone letting, selling or managing properties. If you are in doubt about anything seek legal advice.

For more information visit:

www.communities.gov.uk/housing/rentingandletting/privaterenting/publicationsaboutprivate/landlordsrights

As a landlord, what would I be responsible for?	What would my tenant be responsible for?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing tenants to reside in the property without disturbance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying the rent as agreed, on time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making reasonably prompt repairs and undertaking maintenance to the property if required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In most cases, paying the council tax, water and sewerage charges – but if you pay them, you can include the cost in the rent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the structure and exterior of the property, space heating, hot water installations and water supply, electrical wiring, basins, baths, sinks and toilets etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bills for gas, electricity and the telephone etc unless you agree otherwise with the tenant.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that all gas appliances are safe and maintained annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer (www.gasaferegister.co.uk). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking proper care of the property and reporting any damage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sure all electrical equipment is safe to use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not causing disturbance or nuisance to neighbours.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing prospective tenant(s) an energy performance certificate (EPC*). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing you, the landlord, with access to the property for repairs and inspections, providing they agree and reasonable notice has been given by you or the letting agent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying for an HMO** licence where applicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the council's private sector housing team with access where reasonable notice has been given.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the property is furnished, ensuring it meets the necessary fire safety regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving the required amount of notice if they wish to terminate the agreement (usually a minimum of one month).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing and maintaining smoke/ fire alarms; and for properties such as HMOs – fire extinguishers, fire blankets and fire escapes. 	

* From October 2008 it became compulsory for all properties on the rental and sales market to carry out an EPC. These are carried out by an accredited energy assessor. They are designed to give prospective tenants an idea of the running costs of a property and to give recommendations that will help landlords to make their properties as energy efficient as they can be.

** HMOs that require a licence are properties occupied by a group of people who are not a family.

As a landlord, what rights do I have?	What rights does the tenant have?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek possession through the courts, if: the rent remains unpaid for two or more months, where the tenant breaches the terms of the tenancy, becomes bankrupt or enters into an arrangement with creditors, but only if the correct notice has been served. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To know the name and address of the landlord.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To dispose of any unclaimed belongings left at the premises once the tenancy has ended and following the expiration of the time specified in the tenancy agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To live in a property that is in adequate condition for rental purposes and free from major defects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To exercise the break clause if there is one specified within the tenancy agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have repairs and maintenance needed within the property carried out in reasonable time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek possession of the property if the tenant has damaged it (although possession is not mandatory). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To live in safe accommodation, with all equipment and systems meeting the required safety standards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To collect overdue rent payments from the tenant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have a Gas Safe registered engineer inspect and certify the gas annually.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enter the property once the tenant has given you permission and provided reasonable notice (usually 24 hrs) unless there is an emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have quiet enjoyment of the property, without the landlord entering the property and disturbing tenants.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have a rent book, if the rent is payable on a weekly basis.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be given a reasonable (statutory) period of notice if the landlord wants the agreement to end (two months).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have the security deposit returned within a reasonable period of time (within 10 days once everything has been resolved).

Can the tenant give the tenancy, or sublet, to someone else?

If the tenant has paid a premium for the property (a sum which is additional to rent or a sum paid as a deposit which is greater than two months' rent), he/she will be able to do so unless there is a term in the tenancy agreement preventing this.

How frequently can I put up the rent?

Before the tenancy begins you should agree with the tenant the rent amount (which should be the going market rate), arrangements for paying it and arrangements for reviewing it. All this information should be included in the tenancy agreement.

If it is not in the tenancy agreement you must ensure any fixed term agreed has come to an end. If the fixed term has come to an end and the tenancy has lapsed into a periodic tenancy, give one month's notice, try to get the tenants agreement, and follow procedures found at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/assuredtenancyforms

You should also ensure you only charge market rents, which are the 'going rate' and are affected by the availability and cost of other similar accommodation in the area.

What if the tenant won't leave?

You cannot evict a tenant yourself but you can apply to the county court to get your property back. In certain cases you can use an accelerated possession procedure which can avoid the need for a court hearing. For further guidance seek advice from a solicitor or contact your council's housing advice team.

Can the tenant be evicted as soon as I have a possession order?

If the court orders possession on one of the mandatory grounds, the tenant will have to leave on the date specified in the court order – this is called an absolute possession order. If the court orders possession on one of the discretionary grounds, it can either grant an absolute possession order or it may allow the tenant to stay on in the property provided he or she meets certain conditions – for example, paying back an amount of rent arrears each week. This is called a suspended possession order and the tenant cannot be evicted provided that he or she meets the conditions.

You cannot evict the tenant yourself. If he or she still refuses to leave after the date specified in the order, you must seek a warrant for eviction from the court. The court will arrange for bailiffs to evict the tenant.

What happens if the tenant breaches the conditions of a suspended possession order?

You may apply to the court for an absolute possession order or a warrant for possession, depending on the terms of the suspended order.

Can I ask the tenant to pay rent after I have served a notice seeking possession?

You can ask the tenant to pay rent until the date of possession granted by the court. If the tenant refuses to leave after the date in the court possession order and you ask him or her to pay rent, there is a danger that the court could rule that a new tenancy has arisen. However the tenant is liable to pay you damages for continued occupation of the property (known as mesne profits). You should seek legal advice in these circumstances.

Can the court order the tenant to pay back all the rent he or she owes?

If possession is ordered on the grounds of rent arrears, the court will normally order the tenant to pay back the rent owed at a rate appropriate to his or her circumstances. If asked to consider it, the court may also award a sum to cover interest on the outstanding rent.

If the amount of money the tenant owes is £5,000 or less, you could make a claim through the small claims court (county court) which is cheaper than claiming formally through the main court. If the tenant does not contest the claim, there will be no need for a court hearing. If he or she does, there will be an arbitration hearing unless your case is too difficult to be dealt with under the small claims procedure and then it will be transferred to the open court. You should apply to the county court to make an application for small claims court proceedings.

3. Support and advice from council housing advice teams within Greater Norwich



3. Support and advice from council housing advice teams within Greater Norwich

What is a housing advice team?

A housing advice team is made up of people trained in housing law and equipped to provide practical support and advice to stop homelessness occurring.

How can they help me?

The housing advice team can give advice to landlords on tenancy issues, and use their training and experience to:

- resolve problems such as rent arrears so that your tenant could stay at the property
- advise you on your rights and responsibilities.

Some teams provide trained Family Mediation Association (FMA) mediation officers to help solve conflict and prevent homelessness, particularly when there are landlord and tenant disputes.

Money advisors can also be provided to help your tenant manage any debts and prioritise rent payments.

How do I access this advice?

Encourage your tenant to get housing advice – housing advice teams can work with your tenant either before or after you serve Notice of Intent to Seek Possession.

Contact:

- **Broadland District Council**

t: 01603 430605 • e: housing.advice@broadland.gov.uk

- **Norwich City Council**

t: 0344 980 3333 • e: housingadvisers@norwich.gov.uk

- **South Norfolk Council**

t: 0808 168 2222 • e: housingadvice@s-norfolk.gov.uk

4. Local housing allowance (LHA)



4. Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

What is LHA?

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the latest way of working out housing benefit for people on a low income who rent from private landlords. It is based on the area in which the person lives and the number of bedrooms they require – not how much the rent is.

How does LHA affect me as a landlord?

The main difference between LHA and housing benefit is that most payments will be made directly to your tenant. This means they will be responsible for paying the rent to you, unless they are classed as vulnerable. (This is the same as if they were working and receiving a wage that covered all of the rent.)

What are the LHA levels in my properties area?

Each month a new rent level will be published for your area. To find out room entitlement and the rate your tenant will be paid, please visit: <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/Secure/LHASearchIntro.aspx>, or visit your council's website.

Or contact:

- **Broadland District Council**

t: 01603 430602 • e: benefits@broadland.gov.uk

- **Norwich City Council**

t: 0344 980 3333 • e: benefits@norwich.gov.uk

- **South Norfolk Council**

t: 0808 168 2222 • e: benefitsmailbox@s-norfolk.gov.uk



5. Help with renting your property

5.1. Private sector leasing schemes

5.2. Accredited Landlord scheme

5. Help with renting your property

5.1. Private sector leasing schemes

What are private sector leasing schemes?

A private sector leasing scheme offers landlords a simple way of renting their property by leasing it through the council or a registered charity on behalf of the relevant council. The leases are generally for up to five years. This is usually subject to a minimum agreement length of between six months and a year, during which the lease cannot be terminated (there is no break clause).

What are the benefits of private sector leasing schemes?

Rents are set at a competitive rate and are paid to you, whether or not the property is let. The property is handed back to the landlord at the end of the lease in the same condition as it was when the lease began – less fair wear and tear. Any damage by the tenants is put right before the property is returned. Landlords can also choose whether to deal with their own repairs or whether they wish for repairs to be carried out as part of the lease agreement. Schemes are run by specialist housing staff that have vast experience in managing different types of properties.

How can I join a scheme?

To become part of Norwich City Council's Let NCC you will need to have properties within the Norwich City Council boundary, to pay a management fee and provide some property certificates. If your property is within either the Broadland District Council or South Norfolk Council boundaries you should contact the relevant authority, who will explain the options available to you.

For further information about Let NCC:

- phone us on 0344 980 3333.
Lines are open 9am–5pm each week day
- call in to main reception at City Hall
- make an appointment
- email us: pslt@norwich.gov.uk



Note: Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council only run a small leasing scheme in conjunction with Norwich City Council, through the GNHP Empty Homes Scheme. However, you should keep in contact with your council for any developments.

5.2. Accredited Landlord scheme



What is Accredited Landlord?

Accredited Landlord is a voluntary scheme in the Greater Norwich area for landlords who abide by a set of codes and provide decent management and accommodation, as well as maintain a positive and professional relationship with their tenants.

The scheme is run by the partners of Property Information Point, who are Norwich City Council, Broadland District Council, South Norfolk Council and the Eastern Landlords Association.

What are the benefits of the scheme?

By becoming accredited you can improve your lettings business by:

- accessing our landlord incentives* which include home improvement grants, free advertising, free training courses and, in some cases, financial incentives for letting to certain tenants
- being promoted as a professional landlord with a high standard of accommodation through the website www.propertyinfopoint.co.uk and the use of the Accredited Landlord logo
- becoming a main competitor in the lettings market, having a market advantage over other landlords and separating you from those that could be deemed unscrupulous and/or unprofessional
- putting you in direct contact with the accreditation scheme which can direct you to advice on legislation, legalities, good practice and other issues concerned with the private rented sector
- giving you the opportunity to participate in partnership schemes with the councils as well as decision making processes for matters that may affect you.

How can I join the scheme?

To find out more about the scheme and the other benefits:

- phone us on 0344 980 3333.
Lines are open 9am–5pm each weekday.
- email us: gnprivaterenting@norwich.gov.uk
- or visit www.propertyinfopoint.co.uk

* Incentives are subject to availability and change.



6. Property conditions under the Housing Act 2004

6.1. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

6.2. Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

6.3. Decent homes standard

6. Property conditions under the Housing Act 2004

6.1. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

What is HHSRS?

The Housing Act 2004 brought in a new system to assess the safety of homes (including houses, flats and bedsits).

The principle behind HHSRS is that homes (including outbuildings, yards, amenity space, and means of access) should provide a safe and healthy environment for occupiers and visitors.

The system is based on a risk assessment of 29 hazards (visit the landlord area and go to 'property management' at www.propertyinfopoint.co.uk). Once an assessment is made the hazards are scored as either category one* or category two**.

The council usually inspects accommodation when there has been an enquiry about standards or where the property is licensed. In most cases the owner and the occupier will be given at least 24 hours notice before an inspection.

What action can the council take?

If a category one hazard is found, the private sector housing officer will provide the tenant, landlord and other interested parties (such as owners and agents) with a report and a list of remedies. The officer will discuss the work needed with the tenant and landlord and come to an agreement on a reasonable timescale in which to get the work completed.

If work does not progress the officer has a duty to take action.

* A category one hazard is where the landlord has a duty to take action when there is an intolerable level of risk.

** A category two hazard is when the landlord has the option to take action when there is a hazard, but is strongly advised to do so.

Action can include

The serving of a Housing Act Notice, such as:

- An Improvement Notice
- A Hazard Awareness Notice
- A Prohibition Notice
- An Emergency Prohibition Notice
- A Demolition Order.

Under the council's enforcement policy there is a charge for serving certain notices (improvement notices, prohibition orders and taking emergency remedial action).

How can I assess the hazards as a landlord?

It is good practice for any landlord to make an assessment of any possible hazards.

Make your own inspection of the property, including any gardens, pathways, steps and outbuildings. Look at each of the 29 hazards to see:

- if there is any danger of anyone getting harmed
- what is needed to remove or reduce the hazard.

Some solutions may be simple, such as reducing the risk from a fall on steep stairs by making sure any stair carpet fits properly and by providing a handrail.

For other solutions you may need further information such as fire guidance (visit the landlord area and go to 'gas, electric and fire safety' within the property management section of www.propertyinfopoint.co.uk for Fire Precautions in Dwellings)

6.2. Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

An HMO is a property which is occupied by a group of people who are not a family. This can include:

- bedsits
- shared houses (including student accommodation)
- buildings that have been converted into flats where the conversion does not comply with building regulations

Management regulations

The landlord or managing agent of the HMO must comply with management regulations. These regulations set standards for the running and maintenance of the HMO. They include duties such as ensuring the safety of the gas and electricity supply and keeping fire detection equipment in working order.

The management regulations for shared houses and bedsits are the *Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006*.

If you require full details of the regulations you can obtain a copy from The Stationery Office Ltd or online at:
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20060372.htm>

The management regulations for buildings that have been converted into flats (but do not comply with building regulations) are *The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007*.

If you require full details of the regulations you can obtain a copy from The Stationery Office Ltd or online at: www.opsi.gov.uk

What action can the council take?

Breaches of the management regulations are a criminal offence which may result in prosecution and a current maximum fine of £5,000.

Do I need an HMO licence?

If your property is an HMO and

- all or some of your tenants share facilities (such as a bathroom or kitchen)

and

- the property is three or more storeys

and

- there are five or more occupants comprising of two or more families; a mandatory licence for an HMO is required from the council.

For more information visit: www.propertyinfopoint.co.uk

6.3. Decent homes standard

The decent homes standard is a measure of general housing condition introduced by the government in 2000. Private landlords are not directly required to take any action to bring their properties up to this standard but the councils advise that you aim to meet these standards.

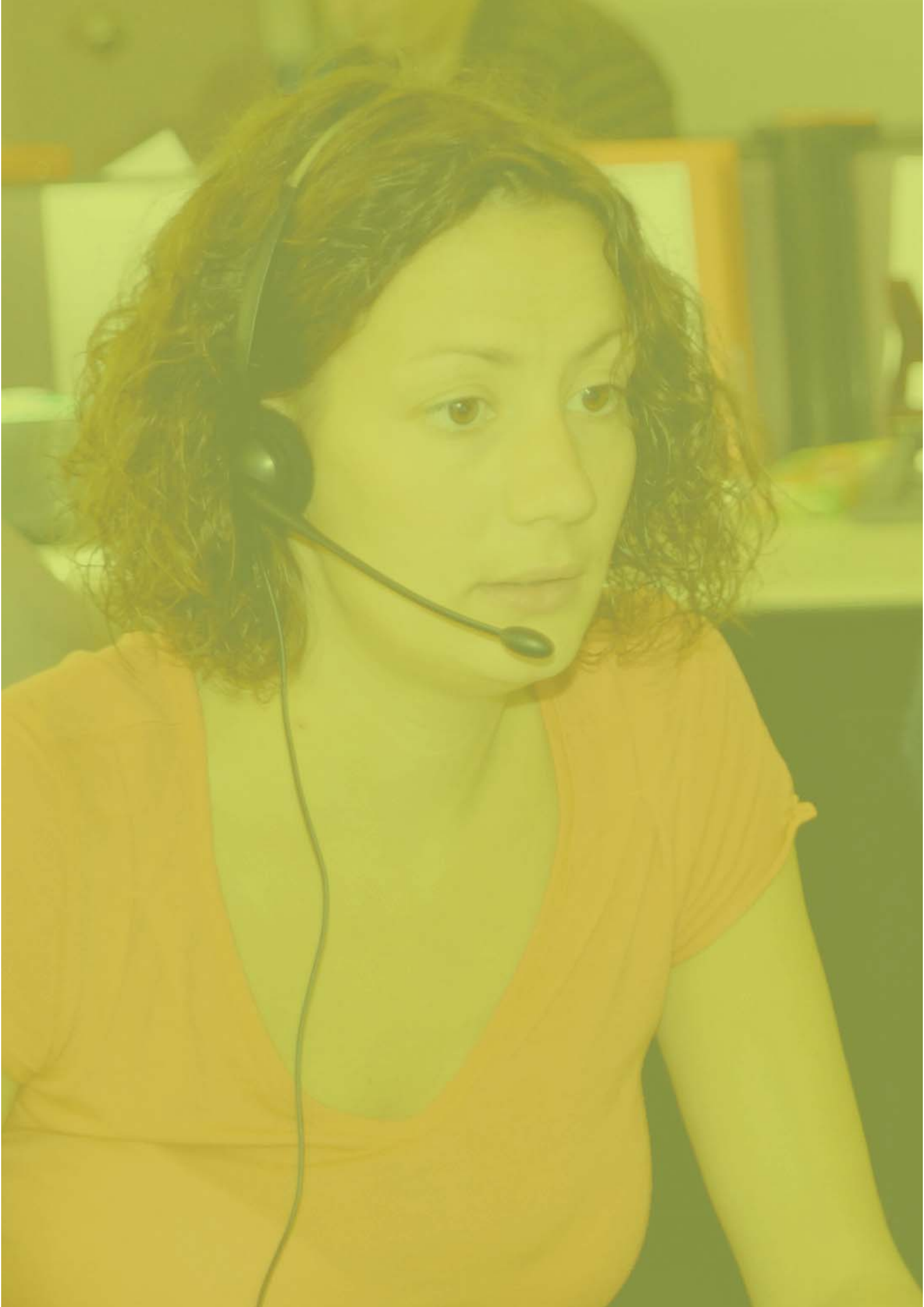
A decent home will need to meet the following criteria:

- Reach a minimum standard for housing where it is free of all category one hazards under the HHSRS.
- Be in a reasonable state of repair.
- Have reasonably modern facilities and services. (eg a kitchen that is less than 20 years old and a bathroom that is less than 30 years old)
- Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (eg loft and cavity wall insulation and a modern central heating system).

A decent home must also provide satisfactory amenities and not be overcrowded.

Contact your local council for further guidance.







7. Support and advice from council private sector housing teams within Greater Norwich

7. Support and advice from council private sector housing teams within Greater Norwich

What is a private sector housing team?

A private sector housing team provides support and advice to owner-occupiers, landlords and tenants to make improvements to their properties. They also take action to make sure that properties meet required legal standards.

How can they help me?

The private sector housing team can help you improve the standard of your property by advising on the requirements of the Housing Act 2004 including:

- HMO requirements
- licensing
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) – for a guide to this please visit <http://www.propertyinfopoint.co.uk> (including standards for fire safety)

They also:

- administer your property licences
- liaise with other enforcement bodies, such as the fire service, to ensure you get consistent and fair advice.

What help can I get for improving my property?

The councils' private sector housing team can help landlords and tenants to make improvements to their homes. For example, you may be eligible for grants towards the cost of thermal insulation.

How do I access this advice?

Contact:

- **Broadland District Council**
t: 01603 430517 • e: p.s.housing@broadland.gov.uk
- **Norwich City Council**
t: 0344 980 3333 • e: privatesectorhousing@norwich.gov.uk
- **South Norfolk Council**
t: 01508 533694 • e: hrenewal@s-norfolk.gov.uk



8. Useful contacts list

8. Useful contacts list

Broadland District Council services: 01603 431133
www.broadland.gov.uk

Norwich City Council services: 0344 980 3333
www.norwich.gov.uk

Norwich City Council antisocial behaviour hotline: 01603 212100

South Norfolk Council services: 01508 533633
www.south-norfolk.gov.uk

Transco for gas leaks (freephone): 0800 111 999

Gas supplier helpline: 0870 608 1524

Electricity supplier helpline: 0870 196 3082

Anglian Water helpline: 0845 714 5145

British Gas helpline: 0845 609 1122

British Gas language helpline: 0845 310 8899

Tenancy deposit protection schemes:

- **Tenancy Deposit Solutions** (insurance based): 0844 980 0290
www.mydeposits.co.uk
- **The Deposit Protection Service** (custodial): 0844 4727 000
www.depositprotection.com
- **The Tenancy Deposit Scheme** (insurance based): 0845 226 7837
www.thedisputeservice.co.uk

Property Information Point:

Information portal for landlords and tenants interested in private renting/letting

www.propertyinfopoint.co.uk

Accredited Landlord scheme:

Promoting and rewarding landlords that abide by the agreed set of codes and provide decent management and property standards:

01603 212849

Eastern Landlords Association: 01603 767101

www.easternlandlords.org.uk

**The department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) –
The Housing Act 2004:**

Responsible for policy on housing, planning, regional and local government and the fire service.

www.communities.gov.uk/housing/rentingandletting/privaterenting

Direct.gov.uk:

Links to government departments and local council websites

www.direct.gov.uk

Norwich District Citizens Advice Bureau: 01603 765783**Community Legal Advice:** 0845 345 4 345

www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Shelter: 0844 515 1860

www.shelter.org.uk

Stonham HomeStay: 0845 155 0390

Support and advice for vulnerable tenants.



If you would like this information in another language or format such as large print or audio cassette, please contact your local council.

Broadland District Council

t: 01603 431133

e: reception@broadland.gov.uk

Norwich City Council

t: 0344 980 3333

e: info@norwich.gov.uk

South Norfolk Council

t: 01508 533887

e: equalities@s-norfolk.gov.uk



A LANDLORDS' GUIDE TO PRIVATE LETTING