



## **Croydon private rented property licence update**

**Newsletter June 2016**

### **Update on the scheme**

Last year, Croydon Council introduced a landlord licensing scheme to raise housing standards and tackle dodgy landlords who undercut their competitors on price at the expense of quality.

Since the start of the early registration period 1 July 2015, the team has now received more than 26,000 applications for a Croydon private rented property licence (CPRPL).

The CPRPL admin team is responsible for issuing licences and responding to calls and emails from landlords and tenants about the scheme.

As part of the licence-issuing process, the team is required to check each licence application individually. This includes verifying any supporting information that has been provided – such as a gas certificate – and contacting individuals if there are any queries.

The first stage of issuing licences is to send an 'intention to grant' letter to the landlord and any interested parties. The CPRPL admin team has sent a large number of these letters and, as a result, has received many extra responses from landlords disclosing additional information – such as mortgage details – that was not included in their original application. When this happens, the team has then to carry out further checks on the application, delaying the issuing of the licence.

If you are aware that you have additional information that was not disclosed in your application, there is no need to contact us, as you will have the chance to provide this information once you receive your intention to grant letter.

We are continuing to process licences as quickly as possible and we thank those who are still awaiting their licence for their continued patience. Please note that as we have received your application, you will not be subject to enforcement for not having a licence while the licence is being processed.

### **Selective licensing and housing team**

Our new selective licensing and housing team is responsible for carrying out inspections on privately rented properties.



This team has 15 members of staff working with landlords, to make Croydon a better place to rent. The team has a lot to do, with every licensed property in Croydon having at least one inspection over the current five-year duration of the scheme.

To date, the team's work has been prioritised, inspecting properties that we already have concerns about. The team is also working closely with the CPRPL admin team, carrying out visits to properties where concerns have arisen from applications.

All routine inspections are arranged in advance with the landlord. The selective licensing and housing team wants to carry out visits at a time that suits both the landlord and their tenants. To avoid any inconvenience, the team is happy to organise the visit alongside any planned inspections arranged between the landlord and tenant(s).

### **Landlord information pack**

To help landlords and agents in their property management responsibilities, we now have a landlord information pack on our website at [www.croydon.gov.uk/betterplacetorent](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/betterplacetorent)

The pack follows the format of the inspections carried out by our officers, helping you to prepare for inspections.

We are interested to hear what additional information or tools landlords and agents would benefit from being included in the pack. If you have any ideas, please get in touch by emailing them to [propertylicensing@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:propertylicensing@croydon.gov.uk)

### **Landlord forum**

The first landlord forum was held on 24 February and was an open opportunity for attendees to give feedback to the council about how they felt the scheme is working so far. It was also an opportunity for officers to disprove some myths about the scheme.

Feedback from the forum has been used to update the FAQs and information within our online landlord information pack.

Future forum agenda items are:

- Dealing with 'bad' tenants
- Rogue landlords
- Right to rent
- Fire safety



Our landlord forum welcomes landlords, managing agents and tenants. If you are interested in joining, email the team at [propertylicensing@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:propertylicensing@croydon.gov.uk) with your expression of interest and we will contact you directly.

### **Online register**

As people in the borough become more aware of the CPRPL scheme, the CPRPL admin team is receiving more calls from residents and private tenants asking whether specific properties are licensed. In line with this, we have just launched an online register which can be viewed at <https://my.croydon.gov.uk/Landlords/onlineregister>

Using just a postcode, this register will allow you to check whether private rented properties are licensed or whether the owner has applied for a licence.

If your search does not list the property you were looking for, you can select the option to 'report an unlicensed property'. This will provide a form, which, once completed, will be referred to our private-sector housing team for investigation.

### **Amendments to fee structure**

Two amendments have been made to our original fee structure:

- The reduced fee of £350 applies to all first-time-let properties, not just to new builds.
- A fee of £25 per unit for alms houses.\*

Landlords affected by these amendments have been contacted and, where required, refunds arranged.

\*Alms houses have been granted a significantly reduced fee due to the fundamental difference between them and other registered social housing providers. Please note that all other charities providing commercial housing services are expected to pay the full licence fee.

### **Notice of intention**

A notice of intention is a 14-day provisional licence, issued before a final CPRPL, allowing the licence holder time to read the licence conditions and check all personal details. This is in accordance with Schedule 5, Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004.



During these 14 days, the licence holder and other interested parties can make a representation if they feel they are **not** the most appropriate person(s) to be included or bound by the licence conditions. No other representations can be made at this stage of the licensing process.

## Refunds

Please see below our CPRPL scheme refunds policy:

Refunds **will** be issued if:

- you have made a duplicate application
- you made an application for an exempted property by mistake.

Refunds **will not** be issued if:

- we refuse your application
- you withdraw your application
- we revoke (take away) your licence
- you are refused planning permission for a non-mandatory licence.

Also, please note that if you cancel your licence before it expires, a refund will not be issued for any remaining time.

## Administration charges

We have introduced some administration charges for amendments to licences after they have been fully granted. Please see table below for more information:

Change	Charge
Add/amend/remove interested party details	£20
Mortgage details	£20
Freeholder details	£20
Licence holder address or minor amendment to rental property address	£20



Please note that licences are non-transferrable, therefore for change of licence holder or property address, a new registration at full fee is required.

### **Letting services and initiatives for private landlords and agents**

Due to an increasing demand for accommodation and a shortage of social housing in the borough, we need landlords and agents within the M25, including Kent and Sussex, to work with us as part of our housing solutions strategy.

We can provide a seamless lettings service to accommodate your needs free of charge, offer a range of generous monetary incentives, deposit bonds and all legal documentation such as tenancy agreements.

Email us at [landlords@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:landlords@croydon.gov.uk) or call 020 8726 6789.