

Wirral Council Accreditation Management Code of Standards

This Code of Standards is accepted by all landlords as the minimum management standards. It does not replace a landlord legal obligation but will help promote high standards of housing management in Wirral by ensuring tenancy problems are managed effectively, reducing the incidence of crime, anti-social behaviour and harassment and give tenants access to quality housing in Wirral.

Scheme Requirements

- It is a requirement of Wirral Council's Accreditation Scheme that you regularly submit private rented properties to the Property Accreditation Scheme.
- Signatories to the Scheme must ensure that in addition to complying with the requirements of the Scheme, they also comply with their legal requirements.
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) must be provided with fire safety regulations in accordance with current legislation including national and local authority standards and regulations.
- Properties comply with the Property Code of Standards.

Professional Development

- Wirral Council will provide professional Development opportunities to landlords and agents. It is your responsibility to ensure you attend appropriate training organised by the Council.

Prior to Tenancy

- Accurately report property details and allow prospective tenants to view the property with due regard to the right of existing tenants.
- A pre-tenancy check is completed. All obligations on the part of the owner in regard to repairs and property maintenance or improvements have been fully discharged or will be carried out by a date agreed with the tenant/s. Any pre-tenancy repairs or intentions on the part of the landlord to undertake improvements should be confirmed in writing.
- Clearly inform prospective tenants of any fees that may be charged for arranging a letting agreement.

Commencement of Tenancy

If deposits are taken, the landlord/agent must:

- Be a member of a tenancy deposit protection scheme.
- Safeguard the deposit in a scheme within 14 days of receipt.
- Provide details of the scheme to the tenant within 14 days.
- Return the deposit within 10 days of the landlord and tenant agreeing how the deposit should be divided, or within 10 days following notification of an ADR/court decision.

Tenancy Agreement

- Provide tenants with a suitable written tenancy agreement in plain English, in a minimum font size of 12 points (or rent book if weekly tenancy), stating the name, telephone number, current registered address of the owner and agent if applicable.
- Where requested, prospective tenants are permitted sufficient time, normally no less than 24 hours, within which to seek independent advice regarding the contractual terms.
- The contract should not contain clauses that conflict with the tenant's legal rights or with the terms of this
- Clearly detail rates, taxes, services or other charges included in the rent. Your responsibility for maintaining these services should be detailed.
- Include clear written instructions for the payment of rent.
- Include clauses regarding nuisance and anti-social behaviour and the penalties imposed if tenants behave in an anti-social manner.
- Clearly state the grounds for termination of the tenancy and the possession procedure which will ensue if the terms of the tenancy are not complied with.
- Provide details of an emergency contact (if different from details contained in the tenancy agreement), and ensure the procedure works in practice.
- Provide details of the relevant utility companies and ensure that the tenant knows how to get the services transferred/re-connected where necessary.

Receipts

- Provide a receipt for all rent payments upon request, if rent is payable other than weekly. Written receipts must be provided for all cash transactions.

Inventories

- Supply an inventory, indicating the condition of the items where necessary. The inventory must be signed by the landlord and countersigned by the tenant once both parties have had an opportunity to check its correctness.
- Where a Managing/Letting agent is employed, the landlord shall at the commencement of the letting, personally sign the inventory to confirm his acceptance of the agent's description of the items listed in the inventory or delegate responsibility to the agent in writing.

During Tenancy Repairs

- Tenants provided with a point of contact in case of emergency.
- Emergency repairs completed within 24 hours of the defect being reported.
- Urgent repairs completed within 5 days of the defect being reported.
- Non urgent day to day repairs completed within 28 days of the defect being notified.

Housing Benefits

- If Housing Benefit is paid directly to the landlord and there is an overpayment, it must be repaid to the Housing Benefit Section subject to the landlords right of appeal.
- Advise tenants to update the Housing Benefits Section with any changes in their circumstances landlords who are aware of changes must also notify the Housing Benefits Section.
- Encourage tenants to return review forms and to be in for notified visits.
- Promptly advise Housing Benefits of any changes when a tenant vacates a property.

Disputes

- Where disputes arise between the landlord and tenant, make a written response to correspondence from tenants or their agents within 3 weeks. Ensure that all settlements and agreements reached are honoured within 3 weeks of such a settlement being agreed. Maintain courteous professional relations with tenants during any dispute.
- Provide contact details to immediate neighbours and agree to respond to complaints regarding neighbour nuisance or the anti-social behaviour of their tenants.

Business Conduct

- Not demand money on an unreasonable base.
- Behave in a professional, courteous and fair manner towards tenants and prospective tenants.
- Ensure that in the provision and letting of housing

or associated services and in the letting of contracts, no person, or group of persons applying will be treated less favourably than any other person or group of persons because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

- Adopt the correct procedure for tenancy termination and refrain from any act of harassment or illegal eviction.
- Ensure adequate insurance is in place for property and landlords furnishings.
- Give adequate notice of entry before inspecting a property, except in the case of an emergency.

Agreement

I agree to abide by this Code of Standards. Any other properties subsequently submitted by myself via letter or email are covered by this agreement. I understand that the accreditation status of a property will be revoked if it fails to meet the standards of the Scheme. An appeal process is in place.

Name and address of landlord:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Signature:

Date:

NB: Please note the contents of the Privacy Notice included with required Application Form for Property Accreditation Scheme which explains how Wirral Council will use any personal information you provide to Housing Services and any contact you have with the Council.