



PRIVATE TENANT

CFPT's second annual conference a winner

The Future of the Private Rented Sector

The conference on 16th November at City Hall attracted 65 delegates from a wide and eclectic range of backgrounds; from the IHO and Law Society through LA and independent housing advisors, private solicitor firms and letting agents to landlords and tenants.

It is possibly the first event to bring together such a diverse audience of professionals and lay people to exclusively discuss the private rented sector.

Dr Phylis Starkey MP opened the conference with a keynote speech outlining the ODPM Select Committee's scrutiny and review of the PRS as part of its investigation into the UK's housing over the coming months. She emphasised the British 'obsession' with home ownership – 90% of us aspire to own our own homes – and affordability problems for younger would be home-owners, stating that affordability and housing supply are top of the agenda for MPs and their constituents.

However, Dr Starkey cautioned against the tendency for people to see home-ownership as an investment in itself for their pension, saying that people will still need somewhere to live in retirement. But with mortgages taking up to 60% of peoples' income, pensions may not be at the forefront of everybody's minds and a further luxury that many simply cannot afford.

The conference moved onto the role of the PRS as presented by

Abigail Davies of the Chartered Institute of Housing, who illustrated the two key roles as investment vehicle and housing market. Abigail opened that many there may be surprised to see the CIH, who normally worked on social sector housing, at a conference on the PRS.

This reflects the fact perhaps that the rental market is a growing one. And with the private sector outbuilding social housing, the PRS can no longer be so ignored by the established housing policy drivers; laissez-faire is no longer an option as is clearly evidenced by the Housing Act 2004.

Elizabeth Brogan of the National Landlords Association gave a presentation on the regulatory frameworks within the Act including HMO licensing, tenancy deposit schemes and the new hazard rating system, whilst Martin Partington of the Law Commission, Judy Nixon of Sheffield and Lancelot Robson of Kingston Universities looked at dispute resolution, and Shelter's Liam Reynolds presented his research on security of tenure. Magnus Hammar of the International Union of Tenants gave a illuminating overview of International PRS comparisons, and highlighted a very worrying trend, particularly at present in Eastern European states, which are busy deregulating their housing markets and enacting large scale transfer of social housing to the private sector.

With such diverse participation on the day it was inevitable that there would be conflicting views, the landlords in large part being

represented by Mike Stimpson of Brighton who argued that private landlordism is not necessarily a business but an investment, and that HMO licensing would simply result in landlords letting to fewer people to avoid the need to register. For many landlords and tenants the issues can be emotive ones; whilst certainly privately let accommodation remains the landlord's property, as Law Society representative Jon Woolf argued, no-one should forget that it is also and equally a tenant's home.

Laissez-faire is no longer an option

CFPT is proud to have hosted this conference and was extremely pleased to receive excellent feedback from both delegates and speakers, we have delegate's packs with a conference report for anyone who would like to receive one Please contact CFPT at **11-17 The Marr, Camden St, NW1 0HE, camfpt@lineone.net, or on 020 7383 0151.**

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Camden Federation of Private Tenants is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act as The Camden Federation for Private Tenants Limited Registered No: 25086R

WINTER WARMER



Stay Warm this winter with these tips!

This winter has already been colder than usual, and experts are predicting that temperatures will remain lower than recent years for most of the winter. In these extremely cold conditions, it is vital that steps are taken to ensure that you stay in good health, and the first place to do this is your home.

According to charity Help the Aged, last winter 28,700 older people in England and Wales died of preventable, cold-related illnesses. Everyone over 60 (since 25 September 2005) can claim a Winter Fuel Payment grant to help keep your home warm. This scheme provides money for fuel bills, and any home where one or more resident is over 60 years old should be eligible for a winter heating grant of around £200-300. Call the Winter Fuel Payment Hotline (0845 915 1515) for more information. There are also many free products and services designed specifically for older people by energy suppliers, such as the British Gas 'Here to HELP' programme. Why not contact your supplier to find out what they can offer.

Insulating your home properly can save a lot of money every year, as well as helping the environment and keeping you in good health. For example, simply turning your thermostat down by 1°C you could cut your heating bills by up to 10 per cent and save you around £30 per year. The government provides grants for installing insulation and efficient heating systems which will reduce the cost of your bills and make your home more energy efficient. Visit www.saveenergy.co.uk to find out more about grants and

energy saving tips, or call the Camden Council Warmth for All helpline (0800 801738). This helpline can advise you on a wide range of energy issues and grants, and can check that you are receiving all the financial and practical help that you are eligible for. You can save up to £100 a year by changing your supplier too, so why not call the helpline to find out the cheapest gas and electricity suppliers in your area, and if switching supplier is the right move for you. They can help you choose the best energy suppliers for your circumstances and money. If you are on a low income then the council can also advise you of your benefit entitlements, and on income tax and debt.

Energy saving ideas

Some energy saving ideas cost very little, take hardly any time at all, and can keep a lot of warmth in your home this winter. For example, make sure your hot water cylinder is well insulated and that you have insulated hot water pipes. Try to use low wattage energy saving bulbs, as by replacing regular light bulbs with energy saving recommended ones you can reduce your lighting costs by up to £78 over the lifetime of the bulb – and they last up to 12 times longer than ordinary light bulbs. Fix brush seals to exterior doors and letterboxes to exclude draughts. Also, fixing shelves above radiators and putting aluminium foil behind radiators directs the heat into the room so that less is lost through windows.

Keeping the heat in not only keeps the cost of heating down, it's also much better for the environment as less energy will be used up for heating. Try to use draught excluders for the gaps under doors, and close curtains at

dusk to prevent unnecessary heat loss through windows. Try to keep a constant temperature of 18-21°C (64-70°F) in all rooms. If this is not possible or affordable, make sure to keep at least one room warm but pre-heat the bed and bedroom before you go to bed. If the room temperature falls below 16C there is a greater risk of suffering from hypothermia, a heart attack or a stroke. Make sure you wear plenty of thin layers to insulate yourself even when you're at home.

Try to keep warm and healthy by taking a little exercise every day – just make sure you wrap up warm before leaving home, no matter how short the trip. Don't waste heat by keeping windows open, and never sleep with open windows as cold air on the head at night has been shown to increase blood pressure. Have your hot water thermostat set to 55-60°C – it doesn't need to be any higher than this, and you'll save money. Close all curtains at dusk to keep the heat in, and keep internal doors closed to reduce draughts. Turn off lights and appliances that are not being used to save electricity.

Wearing the right clothing to bed is just as important as wrapping up when outdoors. Why not invest in a hot water bottle? These are wonderful for keeping you warm at night, and are relatively inexpensive in high street stores. You could also hang a thick curtain on front and back doors and use draught-proofing strips. Try to keep warm throughout the day by eating hot meals and drinking plenty of hot drinks where possible.

When in the kitchen, choose the right size pan for the food and for the cooker hob, and keep the lid on (it'll boil quicker too!). Only boil as much water as you need, but remember to cover the elements if you're using an electric kettle. A

dripping hot water tap wastes energy, and in one week wastes enough hot water to fill half a bath, so make sure you get any leaking taps fixed and that they're fully turned off. When you use a washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher, always do a full load, or if you can't fill it use the half-load or economy programme. Try to defrost your fridge regularly to keep it running efficiently. Don't leave your TV and video on standby, turn off the main switches and don't leave things to charge unnecessarily.

While there are many ways to reduce your heating bills and energy expenditure, you must always make sure that you are protecting your health during these cold winter months. Most important of all is that you stay warm and healthy this winter.

For more information and free, confidential advice:

Phone:

Camden Warmth for all helpline – **0800 801738**

Email:

energy.advice@islington.gov.uk

Warm Front Team UK

0800 072 0151

Seniorline 0808 800 6565

Winter Fuel Payment Hotline on

0845 915 1515

www.saveenergy.co.uk

www.helptheaged.org.uk

www.camden.gov.uk



CFPT Committee members and staff join guest speakers, Law Commissioner Martin Partington and Wilma Morrison of the Central London Law Centre, at its 25th AGM in September in the London Living Room, City Hall

Older Peoples Outreach Service



HOUSING

Camden Council set up the Older Peoples Outreach Service to promote independent living for older people in their own homes. We hope that by providing the necessary help and support an older person is able to live at home independently for as long as possible. The team is made up of the Service Manager and 5 Outreach Officers who visit people at home. The outreach officer uses the home visit to build up a relationship of mutual understanding so that, together, they can decide what the older person needs to continue to live independently at home or improve the quality of their lives. A major part of the Outreach officer's work involves linking the older person to services within the local community that can assist and support them. The Service is available to anyone over 55 who lives in Camden but not in Sheltered Housing.

Our Mission Statement

"We provide an outreach and support service to enable older people remain independent in their own homes and improve the quality of their lives. We support people across all forms of tenure".

- We can provide support and work with people who have low, moderate and high levels of need.
- We work closely with people in their own homes for an agreed period of time
- We can reduce social isolation by

Helping you stay independent at home

linking people to community services which can include

- Day centre opportunities
- Good neighbour schemes
- Accessible transport
- Welfare rights
- Faith/cultural groups

We can give advice and support on

- Housing Issues
- Repairs Adaptations
- Home safety and Care and repair
- Other forms of suitable re-housing including accessing sheltered housing.
- We can help people access health services such as
- GP's, dentists, opticians, podiatrists etc.
- We can sign post individuals to access alternatives to statutory care services.
- We are able to monitor the well being of and changing needs of older people living independently in the community.
- We work closely with other health and social care professionals.
- We can support older people maximise their income by checking their current income and applying for benefits and charitable grants.

If you think the Service can help you or someone you know, please contact the Service Manager, Lucinda Okadigbo on **0207 794 5055**, email lucinda.okadigbo@camden.gov.uk or write to us at:

**Older Peoples Outreach Service
1A Argenta House
1 Aspern Grove
London
NW3 2AF**



If you are or have been a tenant, you will have heard tales of unscrupulous landlords who put money before quality, and rent books before tenants' rights.

Thankfully, this rogue practice isn't commonplace. Even so, with an ever booming rental market, it pays for new and existing landlords to do their homework and ensure standards are maintained.

The London Landlord Accreditation Scheme is an ideal way to meet and maintain these standards, while at the same time building up a successful rental portfolio. The scheme is a successful partnership of local authorities, private landlord associations, university and National Health Service accommodation units and tenants' groups, administered by Camden Council. The scheme aims to

recognise good landlords and improve property and management standards across London.

The first step to becoming accredited is to attend a one-day development course, which will help provide the skills to run a successful portfolio and information regarding changes to the law. It costs £94.00, (£74.90 when booked online).

Apart from gaining the knowledge to be a good landlord, there are many other benefits to becoming accredited, including: recognition of being a good landlord, market advantage as tenants seek out accredited landlords, reduced fees for licensing under the new Housing Act and grant money. Assistance for

property repairs and improvements for accredited landlords are available from local councils. These grants vary from council to council and terms and conditions apply.

For further details on the range of housing assistance available from Camden go to:

Web: www.camden.gov.uk
Email: env.health@camden.gov.uk
Phone: 020 7974 2090

For further information on the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme go to:

Web: www.londonlandlords.org.uk
Email: LLAS@camden.gov.uk
Phone: 020 7974 1970

GO GREEN in your home!

CFPT will be publishing its 'Going green' booklet for private tenants and their landlords early in the New Year.

Did you know that the domestic output of greenhouse-effect CO2 emissions in the UK is higher than that created by transport? In somewhere like Camden where private tenants make up almost a quarter of the population, it becomes clear that people who rent their homes (and just as importantly – their landlords) have a responsibility to save energy. Full of tips, ideas and information to help you save money whilst saving energy (and the planet!), the guide could save you £100's per year if applied properly. So, if you've been in your home for just 20 days or even 20 years here's how to do your bit to help prevent destructive climate change. **To reserve your copy see our contact details on the back page.**



The HAS will be closed from 23rd dec @ 3pm and reopen on Tues 3rd @ 9.30am

Camden Housing Advice Service

Free, expert advice for private tenants, leaseholders and people seeking accommodation. You can phone us, come in or email us.

Housing Advice Centre

North team
179 West End Lane,
NW6 2LH

Tel: 7974 8855
hacnorth.
housing@camden.gov.uk

Opening hours

Mon, Thurs, Fri: 9.30 – 4pm
Tues: 9.30 – 1pm; 4 – 7pm
Wed: Closed

Housing Advice Centre

South team
Bidborough House
20 Mabledon Place, WC1H 9BF

Tel: 7974 5801
hacsouth.housing@camden.gov.uk

Opening hours

Mon, Tues, Thurs,
Fri: 9.30 – 3pm
Tues: 4 – 6 by appointment
Wed am: Somali speakers only



Awarded for excellence

Cathy Come Home returns

A modern remake of the classic BBC broadcast 'Cathy Come Home' is to be made to mark the fortieth anniversary of the original. The programme was originally directed by Ken Loach and depicted the plight of a mother who becomes homeless when her husband loses his job. The programme raised the profile of homelessness, which led to widespread public concern and helped to establish the charity Shelter. The remake will be set in London and will deal with the inequalities between the growing gap between the rich and poor, which Lucy Hillman of the BBC argues is 'the single biggest issue this government has failed to tackle'.

Housing to go centre stage

Housing will be placed at the centre of the government's economic and social policy according to Communities Minister David Milliband in a pre-budget statement. He has also promised that the government's response to the Barker Review (published in the Review of Housing Supply in 2004) will be released in December and will be 'substantial.' Barker recommended an additional investment of £1.6 billion a year to build enough social housing to meet future needs, and proposed a planning gain supplement or land development tax to ensure local communities benefit from new housing developments. David Milliband's speech followed the Prime Minister's indication that the government was expecting to invest more in social housing. Speaking at the Liaison Committee of MPs Tony Blair acknowledged that social housing needed to be built for people most at risk of social exclusion. He admitted that pressure on social housing was a cause of ethnic conflict as different groups of people competed for limited housing resources.

Life expectancy down to 42 for homeless

St Mungo's, London homelessness charity, has found that on average hostel residents and rough sleepers in London can expect to live to just 42 years. This figure is lower than the life

expectancy of the population in Victorian times and down from 47 less than 10 years ago. It found that one in three rough sleepers had a condition related to rough sleeping such as pneumonia or bronchitis but only half of these are receiving appropriate medical treatment for their condition. It was also found that many homeless people were suffering from foot infections similar to trench foot suffered by First World War soldiers. The charity has called upon the government to introduce new working procedures so that doctors can go to hostels to tackle the health problems of rough sleepers. St Mungo's Director of Programmes Peter Cockersell stated, "We are calling for more of what we have been working on with the NHS and primary care trusts to bring services into our projects and stop our clients using accident & emergency. We want to see a specific facility for homeless people who don't need to be in hospital who do need ongoing treatment."

More new homes needed

The South East England Development Agency has predicted that an average of 34,800 new homes must be built in the South East every year up to 2026 if it is to meet demand resulting from expected economic growth. This figure is 5,000 more than the South East Regional Assembly says it needs. According to SEEDA figures house prices in the South East have risen 70% since 1999 whilst average earnings had increased by 30% which makes housing unaffordable for many people.

Empty Homes controversy

Local authorities are defying the freedom of information legislation by refusing requests from developers for lists of empty homes in the area according to the Empty Homes Agency. Many authorities feel that releasing the information is potentially dangerous and will lead to an increase in crime, as squatters and vandals will be able to use the lists to find unoccupied accommodation. However, David Ireland of the Empty Homes Agency argues that the real problem isn't the information becoming available but the fact that properties are empty at all.

Did you know?

CFPT has a wide range of information leaflets on all issues relevant to private tenants and private leaseholders.

If you would like any of the following free information leaflets, please contact our offices (details on back pg) and we will send you the information free of charge:

- Assured and Assured Shorthold Tenancies
- Regulated Tenancies
- Repairs – a guide for landlords and tenants
- Unfair tenancy terms – don't get caught out
- Notice that you must leave – a brief guide for landlords and tenants
- Bothered by Noise – There's no need to suffer
- My Landlord Wants Me Out – protection against harassment and illegal eviction
- Right of first refusal – for long leaseholders and other tenants in privately owned flats
- Residential Long leaseholders – A guide to your rights and responsibilities
- Home repair assistance
- A Practical Guide For Protecting & Maintaining Your Home (Age Concern)
- Dealing With Your Debts (Rent)
- DIY Home Energy Check
- Have a warmer, healthier home – grants from the Government's Home Energy Efficiency Scheme

And many more from making a small claim to County Court Fees.

Or why not visit our resource library.

Contact us today for details.

La Fédération des Locataires Privées de Camden (CFPT) a besoin de vous.

La CFPT est géré par les locataires
privés pour les locataires privées.

On travaille sur tous les aspects des
problèmes concernent les locataires
privées.

Nous fournissons tous les
renseignements et informations dont
vous avez besoin et nous mettons nos
ressources a votre disposition.

Nous faisons du lobbying du
Gouvernement et des campagnes de
pressions concernant les problèmes
d'intérêt locale et nationale.

Nous avons beaucoup de rapports
très étroits avec les autres groupes qui
opère dans le secteur du logement,
comme SHELTER et on a aussi travaillé

avec le Ministère de l'Ambiant e des
Régions.

Si vous êtes intéressés à nous rejoindre
et à participer à nos activités, nous vous
prions de nous bien contacter.

Si vous voulez qu'on parle d'autres
sujets pas couverts déjà, on vous prie de
nous le dire. Nous sommes toujours
heureux de recevoir vos lettres, vos
questions et vos suggestions.

Vous pouvez devenir un membre de la
CFPT en payant £10.00 par an.

Vous seriez enregistré dans notre liste
d'abonnées.

L'adhésion vous donne le droit d'être
notifié de toutes les réunions, ateliers,
évènements, reports spéciaux et de

recevoir notre bulletin.

On a aussi besoin de bénévoles pour
contribuer a notre formulation et
consultations politique, assister de
temps a autre a causes d'intérêt au
Tribunal, et nous représenter près des
autres Organisation et Comités.

Veillez trouver ci-dessous les
détails pour se mettre en contact avec
nous.

**11-17 The Marr,
Camden Street,
London NW1 0HE
Tel: 020 7383 0151
Email: camfpt@lineone.net**

Camden Federation of Private Tenants

needs you

CFPT is run for and by private
tenants. We work on all aspects of
tenant issues, providing information
and resources, lobbying
Government and campaigning on
issues both locally and nationally.

We have close working links with
other groups such as Shelter and
have worked with Government
Departments on a number of issues.

If you are interested in becoming
involved, please contact us. If you
would like to see other topics
covered, please let us know.

We welcome letters, questions,
comments and suggestions. You can
become a member or a subscriber.
This will put you on our mailing list

and you will receive notice of any
meetings, workshops, events, special
reports, etc., as well as our newsletter
for £10.00 per year.

We also need volunteers to work on
the newsletter, contributing to policy
work and consultations, attending
occasional court cases, and
representing us with other
organisations and committees.

Please contact us at:

11-17 The Marr,
Camden Street, London NW1 0HE

Tel: 020 7383 0151
e-mail: camfpt@lineone.net

This Mark means that we offer a
Quality Assured Information Service.

**Community
Legal Service**



Why not become a member of CFPT?

As a member of CFPT you will be kept informed on current housing issues, legislation and campaigns. You will receive our quarterly newsletter to your door, as well as invitations to meetings and notice of relevant consultations. Your membership will also add valuable support to the Fed.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel no. _____

Email _____

1 I enclose £1 for membership plus £9.00 subscription fee*

2 I would like to donate £ _____ **3** Total enclosed _____

Signature _____ Date _____

**We can waive the application fee in cases of hardship, please contact the office in complete confidence.*

**Please fill in your details and send
with payment to:**

Camden Federation of Private Tenants
FREEPOST LON12470
London
NW1 2YW

I am an/a: (please tick)

- Regulated Tenant
 Assured Tenant
 Assured Shorthold Tenant
 Other