

Landlord Update July 08

After the benefits road shows held at Newport Football Club earlier this year I promised to keep you up to date with progress within the service and events that may affect you.

Performance

New claims and changes in circumstances continue to be assessed promptly and exceed the DWP performance standards.

	April	May	June
New Claims : end to end processing (days)	19.21	19.70	17.49
Changes in circumstances (days)	7.94	9.82	8.65

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

The introduction of the Local Housing Allowance on 7 April this year provides that payments for all new claims must be made direct to the tenant unless the tenant is deemed vulnerable. It is in our interest to protect tenancies, so if you as a Landlord are not receiving payments from your tenants, it is important that you let us know as soon as possible and we will suspend rental payments and investigate.

In addition the Benefits team is working closely with the Citizens Advice Bureau in arranging appointments for those Customers who may need additional support with monetary and debt advice. This includes advice with managing finances and how to open a bank account into which Housing Benefit can be paid. This initiative is part of the local safeguard arrangements put in place to protect tenancies. For further information, contact the Benefits team by telephoning 01983 823950.

August LHA Rates

Category	Room Need	LHA Rate Weekly £	LHA Rate Monthly £
A	Shared room rate	66	286
B	1 Bedroom	103.85	450.02
C	2 Bedroom	132.12	572.52
D	3 Bedroom	155.77	675.00
E	4 Bedroom	206.54	895.01
F	5 Bedroom	288.46	1249.99

Please note the household of any claimant determines the size of accommodation required rather than the number of rooms in the property.

I know that some Landlords feel that the rates are not representative of current market rents. The figure is calculated from the median of private market rent details received by the Rent Service for the last twelve months. It is important that Landlords provide the Rent Officer with private market rent information on a monthly basis because LHA rates are calculated on this data. You can do this by accessing the rent officer website <http://www.therentservice.gov.uk/lettings-research/index.asp> .

Find a home scheme

The Housing Team has developed a new scheme, which includes a package of measures that will encourage you the Landlord to work with the Council to open new housing options for people. In return you will have the reassurance of the Council's support if any issues arise with the tenant.

How does the scheme work?

The council enters into an agreement with local landlords for a fixed period to rent out their properties. There is a normal Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement between the Landlord and tenant and the property is managed by the landlord or an agent acting on his behalf. Affordable rents are agreed with the landlord in advance based on the current local housing allowance for the property type.

In exchange, the Isle of Wight Council are offering landlords;

- Initial one off payment of £300 to landlord for every property taken on
- Guarantee for damage caused by tenant above fair wear and tear up to a maximum of £3000
- Rent guarantee for the life of each tenancy
- Rent guarantee if we are unable to supply tenant during life of agreement
- Enhanced access to Housing Benefit
- Nominate tenants with housing related support
- Deposit or bond at end of agreement

How can I find out more information?

Contact the Housing Options Team on 01983 823040.

Future Events

In September 2008, Housing Services will be hosting the next Landlords Fair. These are open events enabled to keep landlords and agents informed of changes in the law, services of the Council and initiatives.

Topic's being covered will include the new requirement for energy performance certificates, which comes into effect on the 1st October 2008 and an update on the local housing allowance.