iHOWZ

The Professional Association for Landlords

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New Website Goes Live

See the back page for more information

Who Will House The Homeless?

Government has given local authorities funds to house homeless people in temporary accommodation. That support ends at the end of March and by that time local authorities will be required to find more permanent accommodation for those temporarily housed.

One wonders what the expectations of Government and local authorities are; for example, are local authorities themselves going to provide more permanent accommodation, or perhaps the social housing providers, or will it be the private sector that local authorities will turn to, to house these people?

Once again, it seems that the current flood of planning approvals appears to be for student housing. If not that, we see housing associations preferring to provide properties for sale or on part rent, part purchase basis. Few seem to be providing accommodation for single 'homeless' people at all, local authorities appear not to be building single person accommodation in any quantity and the build to rent investors are likely to choose more affluent tenants for their properties.

It appears therefore that it will be the private rented sector that will be urged to assist in the re-housing of these people, many of whom will have mental health or alcohol/drug problems. It is unlikely that they will be supported in any real way, and with the proposed changes to evictions, private landlords would be well advised to be extremely careful in accepting any of these people without ensuring that they will not be left with a most difficult position in respect of antisocial behaviour, etc. Government and local authorities need to have a programme that is acceptable to private landlords, including reasonable eviction access in the event of problems, if it expects private landlords to be the social landlords of the sector.

Cautious Optimism

As a Country we seem to be on the mend, things are certainly looking brighter than 6 months ago. The budget came and went and so far there have been no major surprises, no changes to Capital Gains Tax and stories about a wealth tax seem to have been silenced at least for a while. But it is clearly going to take a considerable time for the economy to recover, it is disheartening looking at all the boarded up shop fronts in Brighton Town Centre. Friends that are Business owners have reluctantly had to let staff go. The dual uncertainty of Brexit and the pandemic is leading to nervousness in the economy.

But there is also an optimism, people want to go out and see their friends, go for a walk and have a coffee and cake, go to the pub, go to the restaurant, go on holiday, the world will not go back as it was, but there will certainly be new opportunities. The property market is buoyant in Brighton with people from London wanting to move out of the capital, if you don't need to go to the office every day you can move further away from it and achieve a better balance in life given that the importance placed on home has changed. Our homes have become an office, school, coffee shop, restaurant, pub, cinema, place to rest and recharge, supermarket and exercise arena in one. My eldest daughter has recently moved from her compact rented top floor London flat to one with a garden. I cannot go to the gym, but in January I brought myself a new bicycle for exercise.

The rental market might take a little time to recover, the Serviced Accommodation market switched from short-term rentals to longer-term AST rentals, but it looks likely that it will switch back by mid year. With pubs, clubs and Cafe's closed many younger people who lost their jobs returned to parent's homes. While in the student market we wait to see if the Foreign students return this year or next. For the University of Sussex that has over 20% foreign students this is potentially a big drop in numbers for the market to bear in Brighton.

Evictions are almost impossible. As we have put on the front page of this newsletter it is vital that you check your rents, chase missing rents and continue or start a dialogue immediately with your tenants that are falling behind. Be realistic as to what you tenants can afford if they are struggling. If you take on new tenants it is vital that you check their credit history, it is better to have an empty property for a few more weeks than a tenant who is unable or unwilling to pay.

We would like to welcome our newest member to the team, Sian Timmermans. Sian joins us to drive our Social Media presence and to help us with the web site.

As ever we have been busy at iHOWZ, our new web site will go live within the next month.

As always iHOWZ is a not for profit organisation that is there for you our members. We always do with help; there are always more tasks that need doing with than hours in the day. If you have any time and want to help out please get in touch. Equally if you have articles for the newsletter or the website, or there are subjects that you would like us to cover, perhaps via a virtual meeting, let us know.

Evictions

Always a thorny subject, but even more so with all the shenanigans with the courts.

We have always said:

1. Ensure due diligence before offering. It is worth spending the time and money to get it right at the outset, rather than (potentially) losing many months of rent. Don't forget that the referencing through Boswells is always available to give you peace of mind, as well as Rent Guarantee insurance
2. Keep a good eye on your let whilst it is progressing
3. And the most important one; keep communicating with your tenants, even if you have the Tenant From Hell!

And, at the moment, we suggest you seriously consider getting specialist help if you do have to evict. With things changing so frequently at the moment, it could be easy for you to get it wrong, and could cost you a lot more than the fees to be charged.

Electrical Checks

It became law last year that you need a valid electrical check on rental property. My electrician tells me that his company has carried out dozens of electrical checks but only on a slim percentage of the properties that need remedial work have the landlords asked his company to carry it out and correct the faults. Landlords, if you property needs remedial work you also have to get that work carried out.

iHOWZ would like to clarify that an electrical certificate lasts for 5 years, you do not need to get a new electrical check with the change of each tenant. The government has said that some electricians are incorrectly telling landlords that a test needs to be done with a change of tenant. This is not the case.

The Future of Commercial Properties

With the lockdowns and the failure of many commercial enterprises, significant numbers of commercial premises will become vacant and may not be able to be let as commercial premises and will perhaps need to be converted into residential.

Many local authorities purchased commercial premises to supplement their incomes and in fact, as a group, were one of the main purchasers of such premises in the past few years. It is obvious from the present situation that although returns are significantly higher than can be achieved in other areas of investment, there is little doubt prices will come down and good opportunities may well be available to the astute investor.

High Court Dismisses Campaign as Bid to Overturn New Permitted Development Rights & Use Class Changes

wthe High Court has dismissed an application in respect of new permitted development rights to add additional storeys to existing buildings and enabling the demolition of vacant and redundant offices with residential in their place.

In dismissing the campaign as challenged, Lord Justice Lewis noted that the role of the Court is to focus on resolving questions of law rather than making political, social or economic choices.

Mike Stimpson's Column

I am sitting in my office on a very bright and sunny Monday morning, hoping that my staff can resolve the numerous leaking roof problems that have accumulated over the winter months.

In looking back over the past three months, I have experienced a significant increase in rent arrears, not only from residential tenants but also from commercial tenants some of whom have been open throughout all lockdowns but simply will not pay rent, knowing full well that they cannot be evicted at this time. It is a disgrace that Government allows such situations to happen and I, as a longstanding landlord, believe I can run my business in a professional and reasonable manner and do not need Government to tell me that I should house people who simply do not wish to pay the rent.

It is time Government treated landlords as professional people and not expect them to lose large sums of money at the expense of many tenants who will not pay their rental.

I could comment on the probability of Budget changes, but my thoughts would be of no interest when the Newsletter is printed, as it will be after the details are announced by The Chancellor. One thing I will say is that I do not see any favours/benefits for private landlords. It seems that we, as a group, are an easy target for the Exchequer.

As mentioned in other parts of this Newsletter, those people that have been assisted in being provided with temporary accommodation will have to find more permanent accommodation by the end of March or find themselves on the streets. It appears to me that many will not be able to be housed, that is of course unless private landlords take them on.

Whilst Government is intent on allowing the proliferation of student housing, those providers have no obligations in respect of providing any social housing at all. Others in the build to rent industry do provide an element, and often it is a small element, of affordable housing but let's make it clear - affordable is not in any way, affordable to those single persons that Government is so keen to be housed more permanently.

If it is sincere, then let it provide a proper avenue whereby private landlords will not feel that if taking such a person on, they can get lumbered with antisocial behaviour, problems with alcohol and drugs and not easily be able to evict. This is a serious matter and appears to be ignored by both Government and local authorities.

We are all well aware that 2020 was one of the most difficult years that we have ever experienced. Government has done everything to help residential tenants, it has done nothing to assist private landlords. Now is the time for change and hopefully it will come.

May I wish you all a more successful 2021.

Breathing Space Legislation

A new law is scheduled to come into place May 4th that will allow eligible people in problem debt, who receive professional debt advice, access to a sixty-day period in which interest, fees and charges are frozen and enforcement action is paused – referred to as "breathing space".

It will include:

- Credit cards; store cards; personal loans; pay day loans; overdrafts; utility bill arrears
- Mortgage or rent arrears

We intend to discuss this topic in the April virtual meet-up (April 12th, repeated April 13th), and there is also a Fact Sheet.

The Breathing Space moratorium can only be arranged by a licensed Debt Adviser, and is for 60 days; reviewed at the half way stage. During the time of the moratorium the tenant remains liable to continue paying rent, but no action regarding existing arrears can be actioned during these 60 days.

Note that there is also a Mental Health Breathing Space moratorium, where the tenant is deemed to be sufficiently incapacitated to not be able to manage their own affairs, and will probably have been Sectioned under the Mental Health Act. As you can imagine, this is a far more serious affair, and is in place all the time the debtor (tenant) is hospitalised, plus 30 days.

It has always been the case that anyone deemed not to have sufficient capacity to manage a tenancy, and pay rent, has always had to be handled very carefully. Always take specialised advice.

TradePoint Discount

TradePoint have announced all the associated landlords linked to iHowz will have their TradePoint cards set at 10%; so get spending. Not only do iHowz members benefit from Everyday low prices in B&Q but you now get 10%* off almost everything.

Remember that is off almost EVERYTHING in B&Q/TradePoint*, in-store and online including promotional lines giving you access to discounts on over 40,000 products across the full range. . To use, just present the card at a checkout in B&Q/TradePoint; ensure you present it before they start the transaction.

Need a membership card? Visit (TradePoint webpage in members only area of iHowz website) for more details or send us an email at **info@iHowz.uk**

*Please note the scheme: i) excludes delivery; gift cards; concessions; clearance; Amazon products; supplier quoted and selected made to measure products; and ii) cannot be used in conjunction with any other voucher or customer discount card. always works for me.

Energy Performance Certificates

The Government are conducting a review of the EPC system; its place in implementing MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards), and how it can be made more usable for helping a decision for potential purchasers of property, or potential renters of property to be let.

Some of the matters being considered:

- How to ensure EPC compliance is adhered to by working together with mortgage companies and letting agents
- Raising the current fine of £200 for non-compliance with EPC regulations
- Changing the EPC period from its existing 10 years – probably to 5 years
- Allowing major works on a property to require a new EPC to be done
- To ensure EPCs move from a reflection of the features of a building (fabric, services and installed improvement measures) to a true measure of 'in use' building performance. This can be based on more sophisticated building modelling that takes actual energy consumption into account (while remaining a measure of building performance and not occupant behaviour)
- To find an alternative will be needed for large, complex non-domestic buildings, where it can be difficult to model energy use accurately.

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

To remind members that the requirements for MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) are now in place, and that it is illegal to let a property with an EPC rating of less than 'E' ('F' or 'G'), unless an exemption has been sought on the exemptions database. Note that it is intended to raise this requirement, and that it is likely by 2035 all rental property will need to meet a minimum of 'C' – many organisations are pushing for this time to be telescoped.

A number of exemptions are available. The majority of them are valid for only five years, and only once the exemption has been registered in the exemptions register. The exemptions that are expected to be used most commonly are:

- **Cost-Effective Improvements** - All cost-effective energy efficiency improvements have been carried out (or there are none that can be made) and the property remains sub-standard. For this purpose, cost-effective means that improvements pay for themselves within seven years, based on a formula in the MEES regulations. This exemption applies only to commercial properties.
- **High Cost Exemption** - The improvements would exceed £3,500
- **Devaluation** - An independent surveyor states that making energy efficiency improvements would reduce a property's value by more than 5%.
- **Consent is Not Available** - The tenant itself, or a third party, refuses to consent to the energy efficiency improvements.

In addition, there is a temporary exemption of six months for new owners.

iHowz Updates

Regular Email Updates

We would like to remind members that we now send out regular news updates by email; this is addition to the news section on the web site that is also regularly updated. Hopefully you are all in a position to see these, if not please email us **news@iHowz.uk** and we can investigate for you. Apologies if you cannot get emails, but matters are changing so rapidly it would be impractical to cover them in a printed newsletter.

Larger News Items

In case you missed them, these are the larger stories that were in the regular news email update:

- Eviction ban extended in England and Wales
- Third commercial rent moratorium
- Re-activation notice period extended
- House of Lords passes token vote urging more protection for tenants
- Activists demand Covid Rent Debt Fund to wipe out 100% of arrears
- Licensing schemes are irresponsible in the current climate
- Brighton revealed as best city for landlords
- The year ahead in PRS: Key trends for landlords and investors
- Should new HMOs have en suites to combat Coronavirus
- Government does not plan to extend Stamp Duty Holiday
- New 'How to Rent Guide' issued
- Brexit to make lettings sector even tougher in 2021 - claim

All can be read on the News section of the web site. If you can't get access, please contact the office.

Meetings

In view of the fact we cannot hold physical meetings at the moment, we are now holding regular virtual landlord meet-ups via Zoom. All members should be getting advised by email; if you are not please let us know – **info@iHowz.uk**

So far this year we've covered topics such as:

- Handling rent arrears
- Tax
- The proposed leasehold changes
- Student Lets
- Handling disputes

Coming up we've got:-

- Legal update, and GDPR (April)
- Richard Bowser - Managing uncertainty and forecasting for PRS (May)
- Ways to improve the EPC rating on your property (June)

and more being planned.

Whilst it's much better to join these with a computer, it is possible to join with a phone. Let us know if you want to do that and we can send you instructions.

It's a Gas - But Not for Much Longer

In case you've not been paying attention, the Government needs our help to achieve its obligation to be carbon neutral by 2050. I know this will have upset petrol-heads, especially with the announcement of no petrol or diesel vehicle sales from 2030, sorry Mike (Mike Stimpson is a keen car collector).

So How Does This Relate to Us?

Well, residential property is the 4th largest source of carbon emissions producing 15% of the total. (In 2018, 28% of net greenhouse gas emissions in the UK were estimated to be from the transport sector, 23% from energy supply, 18% from business.) With lower levels of energy efficiency in rental properties than those which are owner occupied [60%]

The recent consultation "Improving the Energy Performance of Privately Rented Homes in England and Wales", which closed earlier this year, states ***"[the PRS] represents 20% of our housing stock, and has the highest concentration of fuel poor tenants (17.7%). Improving the energy performance of these homes is a vital part of our wider strategy to decarbonise buildings cost-effectively, in light of the significant challenges posed by climate change."***
It goes on to propose:

- Raising the energy performance standard to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) energy efficiency rating (EER) Band C;
- A phased trajectory for achieving the improvements for new tenancies from 2025 and all tenancies from 2028;
- Increasing the maximum investment amount, resulting in an average per-property spend of £4,700 under a £10,000 cap
- Introducing a 'fabric first' approach to energy performance improvements.

Among the recommendations are:

- The commitment to start to phase out high-carbon fossil fuel heating in off-gas-grid buildings in the 2020s;
- The Future Homes Standard, to be introduced by 2025, which will require new build homes to be future-proofed with low-carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency;
- The Heat and Buildings Strategy, to be published later this year, which will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings, including energy efficiency measures and low-carbon heating as part of an ambitious programme of work required to enable key strategic decisions on how we achieve the mass transition to low-carbon heat

Those of you who already have property in their portfolio with electric heating may have already wrestled with the various heating options. This will impact all of us as the new regulations come into effect and we are forced to move away from a system which originates from the 1930's and has become ever more popular since the 1970s (86% of properties used gas as the fuel for their central heating in 2020)

Watt's the Solution?

It's expected that the majority of heating systems will be electricity based. Retro-fitting insulation and heating certainly won't be a one-size fits all solution. After all, we provide homes to the most diverse range of occupants in residential housing, ranging from emergency housing, HMOS, student lets and other shares to single lets for individuals and families and, like our tenants our properties cover a multitude of construction types and layouts, often in some of the oldest housing stock.

It is unlikely that we will simply be able to swap out our Combi boiler for an electric equivalent and even if that is possible a "wet" electric heating system will require a suitable location for the heating tank. Property type, location, geography, access and cost will probably exclude technology such as heat pumps, micro-wind turbines and even solar. In addition, we may require heating controls capable of managing systems with more than one component.

One thing that is certain is that we will need to embrace change, educate ourselves on the technologies and plan for the investment and change required.

We would love to hear your story if you have expertise in this area or have recently completed an electrical heating upgrade. Please detail your analysis, issues, plans, costs and the impacts – operating cost, effectiveness, EPC.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System

The Government are conducting a review of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Operating Guidance.

Developed in the 1990's, and has been in place for 15 years, HHSRS has always had criticism. In that time, building technology and knowledge about risks and hazards in buildings have developed. It is a tool for assessing risk relating to health and safety matters arising from deficiencies within the dwelling and is the first step local authorities take before considering which, if any, powers under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 Act should be used. It is also a component of the Decent Homes Standard.

HHSRS looks at 29 recognised hazards, and the potential impact on anyone if there is a defect, it applies to all property whether rental or owner occupier; although perversely any property owned by a Local Authority is not subject to HHSRS – a matter we are pushing to have amended.

iHowz sit on the committee looking at potential amendments/improvements to HHSRS, especially the guides available. The main recommendations we have made so far are to substantially improve the guide for landlords, especially to encompass worked examples to aid understanding. We are also pushing for a lot more consistency in its use. If different Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) visit a property they will give different scores to the property. We are urging centralised auditing to be set up to help standardise EHO assessments.

There are two surveys being undertaken that you and your tenants can take, to help improve HHSRS:

- Landlords Survey: Aimed at private and social rented sector landlords. Stakeholders may include local authority or housing association providers, lettings and managing agents, block managers or private and purpose-built student accommodation providers. **(www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CRX2TTD)**
- Tenants Survey: Aimed at private rented sector and housing association tenants and owner-occupiers. **(www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CSD573Z)**

The links for both are in the weekly email update. Alternatively you can email us at info@iHowz.uk if you would like us to add your contribution to our written submission.

The Serviced Accommodation Update

Rodney Townson, Branch Chairman, London

The days are getting longer and the first spring flowers have come out to cheer us up. Add in the Government's relaxations roadmap and anyone with an eye on the serviced accommodation (SA) will finally have something to smile about.
Most of the residential sector got very little support during the pandemic, with the government expecting landlords to be able to seek payment holidays from lenders with restricted access to the courts. Those operating portfolios (directly or incorporated) may have taken advantage of bounce back loans but it was only the professional operators in the SA segment who were eligible for day-to-day support in the form of business rate relief, grants, job retention schemes and reduced VAT rates.

As we emerge from lockdown, many landlords are re-evaluating their rental businesses, especially student landlords – as foreign students may be reluctant to return until September 2022.

Demand for SA has risen significantly since the roadmap for England was announced on 22nd February. While currently very dependant on location with rural and coastal locations the main beneficiaries, the expectation is that towns and cities will also gain in popularity as the dual pulls of workers returning to offices and being able to enjoy everything from restaurants, through to galleries and concerts. It would be naïve to expect a full return to the office, with many predicting a hybrid model where office workers split their time between the office and home and business meetings may be arranged for locations geographically convenient for both parties – perhaps more use of serviced offices and meeting rooms.

Is it Too Late to Offer Serviced Accommodation?

With the expectation of continuing uncertainty for foreign travel, especially family holidays, it is likely that the UK will be the destination of choice for many until Covid passports are agreed and global vaccination levels catch up with the UK. The current roadmap forecasts single family stays from 12th April with the return of international travel and hotels reopening from 17th May and restrictions fully relaxed by 21st June.

The key considerations will be location, condition and market. While your property does not need to be in the prime area of a town, you are unlikely to receive many five star reviews for a tired property in the middle of a "war zone" estate. While some locations will attract tourists most of the year, you need to consider other guest types and possibly repurposing over the winter months. That means considering those travelling for work, which could range from contractors though to professionals with the option of providing emergency type housing to councils over the winter.

Ok, So What Next?

Your guests will expect a well maintained well furnished property with high speed Internet cleaned to a good standard. Price up what it would cost you to bring the property up to standard, furnish it, provide the linen, cleaning and other services to get your base costs. Now check out what similar properties are charging and estimate your potential income.

I'm Still Not Sure

Done well, this could make your property significantly more profitable and even lower your tax bill but it does require organisation and is not hands off. SA is treated more like most other businesses, meaning that provided you meet the criteria, mortgage and other finance costs can be claimed in full and other allowances may be available. If you have another job or just don't want a new one, then it might be better to list the property through an established operator, who will carry out the day-to-day activities, managing small repairs and remitting your net income each month.

I am always happy to hear from existing and potential SA operators to discuss their plans, provide support or mentoring.

rod.townson@yahoo.com

Green Homes Grant Funding Withdrawn

It has been reported that a significant majority of the £2 billion funded package will no longer be available or allocated to those who had applied.

It appears that due to delays in the allocation of vouchers and difficulties with the general operation of the scheme, many of those that had applied will now no longer receive funding. Whilst the £320 million additional funding for 2021/22 will still be made available, the broader funding cut comes as a significant blow to the UK's ambitions to decarbonise the existing housing stock.

Planning Decisions

It is interesting to note the way in which local planning decisions are made and how planning committees make decisions that are completely opposite to each other, dependent on the application.

For example, two major decisions allowing for the demolition of large properties where commercial tenants had been in occupation for very many years and were still operating successful businesses in those premises. The planning decision was to allow for the demolition of both properties and replacement commercial accommodation at ground floor with significant student housing on the upper floors.

Another application in respect of a property that had been empty for very many years was refused with one of the reasons given that perhaps it could be used for a different purpose than housing and that the applicant had not made sufficient efforts to seek alternative use.

On the one hand an application was refused, as the planning committee thought alternative uses might be found for the building, but on the other hand where thriving businesses were occupying existing buildings, the committee did not consider that they should remain and gave permission for the development, which in effect will cause those businesses to vacate the existing premises, often without the opportunity or relocating in the same area.

It just does not make common sense.

A Plea from Mike Stimpson

I have a number of tenants who have electric meters within their accommodation for which they pay by cards, which I supply.

I am informed that one can install a different form of meter in such a manner that an organisation will set up a system whereby all payments for electricity will be either by debit or credit card, which is accounted to the landlord on a monthly basis.

I wonder if any members who have used the meter system with card payments have transferred to a system such as that mentioned and, if so, would they contact me on 01273 324929 or by email stimpsondirect@gmail.com to let me know what they think about the system and whether I should change to it.

I look forward to some replies.

"Haven't a Clue" - Youtube It

Gary Waller

Property magazines, web sites and Landlord Shows always cover the legal aspects, raising the money, finding tenants, but it's the practical aspects that keep us landlords busy. If you want to manage your costs and improve your profitability then you need to at least have some basic skills in property maintenance. Obviously this all depends off course on how much time you have, but since becoming a full time landlord 6 years ago, I have tried hard to improve my own knowledge and skills. Despite basic engineering and woodwork at school, I am not a natural with my hands, skills are hard won.

I decided that I would not touch plumbing, other than the basics like unblocking the sink or toilet, you obviously cannot touch Gas and the vast majority of electrics, but still when the tenants phone with a problem it is always worth going and seeing if you can fix it yourself, half the time it is something simple like the room thermostat is set to low, the pressure on the Combi boiler has dropped, or yesterday's problem, the tenants were unsure how to change the light bulb in the bathroom. All these little jobs can save a £50 call out.

Pre lock down I did a couple of wood working courses, but by far the best way of learning is YouTube. A great example is Charlie DIYte "How to Apply Silicone – Complete pro guide" with 3 million views. A must watch for sealing the worktop or shower.

I now follow carpenters including Peter Millard, Stumpy Nubs, Rag 'n' Bone Brown. I often watch New Zealander Scott Brown Carpentry for tool and building tips, his entertaining 10 minutes videos are a must over breakfast! The tool manufacturers are also worth following, I regularly watch Festool USA both their Live Episodes and their 2 minute tool tips.

During lock down I watch a series of videos by Ron Paulk on how to build a portable workbench, I then paid for and down loaded the plans and built a bench, I modified it slightly to reduce the length by a quarter (to fit our smaller homes). Hope you like my finished version. I then followed it up with building a wheeled wood rack. So if you have a problem you are not sure how to solve, spend 20 minutes on YouTube.

Landlord Legal Expenses Cover Explained

In theory, renting out a buy-to-let property should run smoothly. After all, you're a good landlord and you do your best to provide a decent home for your tenants, which is worth the regular rent they pay in return. If they have any problems, they can talk to you or the letting agency and everything gets resolved with minimum fuss.

Court Costs

Unfortunately, as any experienced landlord knows, it doesn't always work that way. Even with the best intentions, situations can escalate and, before you know it, you have to go to court. There are many reasons that this might happen. A tenant might refuse to pay the rent they owe, or have left the property with unpaid utility bills that exceed the amount covered by their deposit. Alternatively, their behaviour might have reached the point where you're forced to begin eviction proceedings. One thing is for certain, once the courts get involved the costs begin to escalate.

This is what landlord legal expenses cover is for. It's an insurance policy that pays out if you have to meet unforeseen legal expenses relating to your property, including court costs and legal representation. It's usually bought as part of a wider landlord insurance package, alongside buildings and contents insurance and liability cover, but it can be purchased as a standalone policy. The better legal expenses policies also include access to expert legal advice whenever you need it.

Different Disputes

It's not just tenant disputes that could land you in court, though. You may unwittingly find yourself in breach of current health, safety or fire regulations, or be investigated by HMRC for tax irregularities. You could even be involved in a legal dispute with a contractor over work done at your property. Landlord legal expenses cover is designed for those situations as well, so you can manage your costs while the dispute proceeds.

Rent Guarantee Cover

Landlord legal expenses insurance is often purchased in combination with rent guarantee cover. This offers all the benefits of legal expenses cover but also pays out the equivalent of the rental income you should be receiving if this is being withheld. The maximum amount and maximum term will be established in the policy in advance and will be reflected in the premiums you pay. Rent guarantee insurance is usually dependent on thorough tenant referencing being undertaken.

Legal expenses may not be the first thing you think of when you first become a landlord, but if or when they come up, they can be costly. Like all insurance policies, legal expenses cover is a safety net. If you don't need to use it, you have peace of mind. If you do need to us it, it may help you survive a difficult situation without financial disaster.not include this, you could end up out of pocket as the result of a claim.

To find out more about Landlord legal expenses insurance, give us a call on

01603 216399

ALAN BOSWELL GROUP

Social Media Is Go!

We've been around since 1974 serving the southeast and advising the UK and you know what? We've got pretty good at it! But with everything we must adapt to the times and with that in mind we've been a busy bunch already in 2021 and have gone live with new social media channels for you to keep up to date when on the move or just for ease. If you think we deserve a follow or a like, then find us here:

Facebook: @ihowznews | Linkedin: company/ihowz | Twitter: @i_howz

Caption this photo... Comment on it on one of our social media platforms above. Best caption announced next issue! #lookingforanesttorent

New iHowz Website

If all goes to plan, this Wednesday (March 24th) will see our new web site going live.

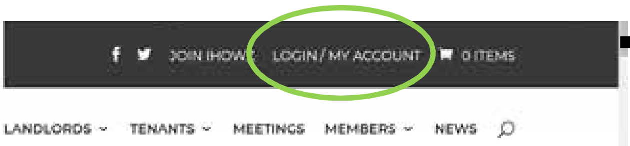
It can still be reached by using www.iHowz.uk.

So if you have it saved, it will still work however, your old password will not work, as we are not able to bring them into the new site.

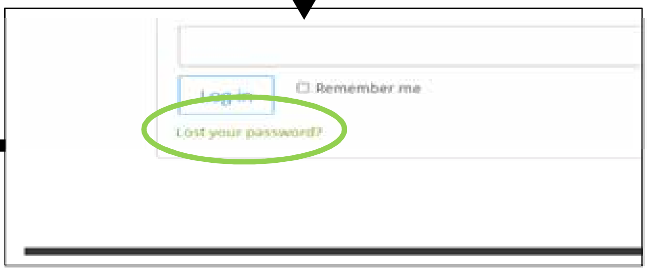
Instructions for getting a new password are below

Start here

Click on 'LOGIN/MYACCOUNT' in the menu at the top

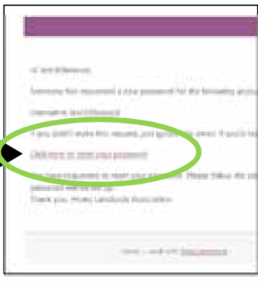


On the login screen click on 'Lost your password?'

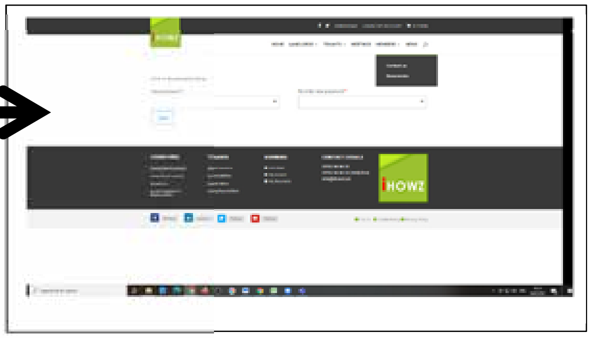


Enter your registered email address

and you will get a reset email



Click to reset your password



And you will be able to enter your new email