



Tenant Newsletter Spring 2012



Finders Fee Opportunities

You will have experienced the proactive way in which we manage your property. We are now looking for more properties in the area to manage. If you have a neighbour or friend who rents, their landlord may consider using us instead of either doing it themselves or using their current agency. There may be other instances where landlords are thinking of selling their property. We are looking to purchase more properties so we may be able to help one another. You may be eligible for a £50.00 Finders Fee if your recommendation leads to us taking on a new property/Landlord!

Let to Buy

Own your own home. If you are interested in moving out of rental and into house owner sector and would like to purchase the house you are currently renting do give Nigel a call to discuss the options that could be open to you under our 'Let to Buy' scheme.

Let's earn some money together!

There are various initiatives around to help people maximise their home's energy efficiency and the following scheme could earn you £50. Please ensure you name Woods properties as your referrer when contacting British Gas. You will also need to let us know you have applied for Landlords permission to be granted.

This quote from MoneyExpert.com:

Free £50 cash if you refer friends & family: Until 15 May 2012 British Gas is offering an **extra £50 cash to anyone that refers persons on qualifying benefits to get free insulation. Plus the household installing the insulation also gets £50.** Neither of you have to be British Gas customers and you can refer as many people as you like to get £50 each time. To get the cash the person needing the insulation must call 0800 975 1195. **They should include the name and address of the referrer so their cash can be sent to them.**

Qualifying Benefits are:

70 or over, or on benefits

- Attendance allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the relevant income is £16,190 or less)
- Council Tax Benefit
- Disability Living Allowance
- Disablement Pension (that includes a constant attendance allowance)
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-rated Employment and Support Allowance
- State Pension Credit
- War Disablement Pension (that includes either a relevant mobility supplement or constant attendance allowance)
- Working Tax Credit (where the relevant income is £16,190 or less)

A day in life of Fiona!

Most of you will have had some form of contact with Fiona in the office since the start of your tenancy, many of you may wonder what she does all day! So to give you an insight into what is involved in managing your property here's a sample of the tasks and the background work involved:

9.30 am check emails while kettle on (constant coffee a must!)

10.00 am view bank statement

- check that rents have been paid in when expected and enter onto computer
- call any tenants that have not paid/chase up unidentified cash payments – remind tenants to put name or house number as a reference
- run overdue rent report and deal with any serious rent arrears – this may involve issuing Section 21 and 8 notices with an accompanying letter. These are issued as standard as soon as the second month's rent is in default and are posted to ensure arrears are paid up before a set date. If the rent arrears are paid up or a mutually agreeable repayment plan agreed it is usually not necessary to act upon the notices.

11.15 am postman arrives, deal with any post, check benefit receipt notifications, contact tenants if benefit suspended and help liaise with council to reinstate

11.30 am go through properties with Nigel, ensuring works orders have been issued for any repairs required and updating on progress of current projects

12.30 pm Accounting

2.00 pm Assist tenants with Warmfront insulation grant application and solar panel grant

2.30 pm check Gas safety certificate expiry dates for next month and issue works orders

3.00 pm call comes in from tenant with a leaking radiator, contact plumber and arrange call out at the earliest opportunity, back up with email works order. Ring tenant back to advise that plumber will be in touch.

3.30 pm check timetable on large project is as tight as possible, encountering time issues with availability of some tradesmen but manage to dovetail into one week in a fortnights time. Sometimes immediate action is not possible as good trades peoples' diaries are always full!

4.00 pm continue with finance until finish.

A lot of the work undertaken in the office is tenant support and progressing maintenance. In the case of maintenance it is sometimes quite tricky, especially on more complex repairs, to get the relevant trades people on site, in the right order and in as short a time as possible. On occasion it could be a couple of weeks after the issue is reported before the work can start. It is important that tenants understand that whilst we would all like repairs carried out yesterday sometimes it is not possible to get someone on site immediately and as explained above a wait is sometimes necessary to minimise the total disruption time to tenants and ensure the job is done correctly the first time!

Rent payments

1. Rent is due monthly on the date of the AST. In certain circumstances an alternative date may be arranged with the office to take pay dates into consideration however these arrangements stand only as long as the rent is paid on the agreed date. Defaulting may result in the withdrawal of agreed late payment plan. Where tenants are in receipt of housing benefit and are 2 months in arrears we will automatically apply for direct payment to prevent a worsening situation. (Though please note that your AST states: *"Statutory Obligations: 59 In the event the Tenant during the tenancy becomes eligible to qualify for Housing Benefit the Tenant agrees to notify the Landlord. The Tenant agrees to notify the Local Housing Benefits Office to pay all monies direct to the Landlord. The Tenant agrees not to make a fraudulent claim and to indemnify the Landlord against all monies at any time to be repaid to the Local Authority at it's insistence."*)
2. Rent can not under any circumstance be 'withheld' against outstanding repairs. This is in contravention of your AST. We make every effort to ensure any repairs are completed as soon as humanly possible but sometimes delay is unavoidable due to parts/labour availability.