



# Runnymede Accreditation Scheme

## Accreditation Scheme Progress

The Runnymede Accreditation Scheme was launched in July 2005 to promote quality student private rented housing in the borough and promote good tenant behaviour.

Since the launch of the scheme, 193 Landlords have come forward requesting application packs. 135 applications have been received and 84 properties have been accredited with around 40 properties still carrying out improvement works to gain accreditation.

We have been encouraged by the number of people applying for accreditation and would like to thank all the Landlords on the scheme for their co-operation with us as we strive to improve the quality and safety of the student private rented housing in the borough.

We understand that some landlords view the works as expensive and unnecessary but in the main most landlords have been very accepting of what has been asked of them. We hope that everyone on the scheme now sees the benefits of fitting smoke alarms and fire doors to their properties. We do not ask for any more requirements in an accredited property than we do when we inspect other Houses in Multiple Occupation through complaints from tenants or through proactive inspections.

We will be actively promoting the Accreditation Scheme with a number of estate agents to encourage more landlords to apply to join the scheme. Other measures to increase the quality of the private rented housing available to students will involve working with the University and Students Union to promote the benefits of renting an accredited property over a non accredited property. We will be working with the university to find a mechanism of inspecting all the properties that apply to advertise on their accommodation list. This change in focus is due to the fact that accredited landlords are benefiting from word of mouth advertising due to the standard of the properties and are less inclined to advertise with the university.

## Changes to HMO Regulations

As some landlords will already be aware there has been a change in the regulations regarding the provision of Wash Hand Basins in every bedroom in Licensable HMO's. The legislation has changed from saying that a wash hand basin is required to leave the local authority the ability to assess if it is reasonably practicable to require the wash hand basins. We have been inviting landlords of licensed HMO's to come forward and have their properties inspected to assess if wash hand basins will be required.

We will be using these inspections to offer these landlords the option to apply for accreditation as the majority of our licensed HMO's are let by students.



## The University Accommodation Office and The Students Union



The college has been happy to have been associated with this scheme for the last two years. There have been a steady number of landlords who have signed up to this scheme and we are looking forward to having many more follow suit. The real benefit is provided to both landlords and student tenants. Landlords can have the peace of mind that their property will be given priority advertising by the Student Housing Bureau to potential student tenants. And on the part of our students, they similarly can be reassured that the quality of property complies with statutory legislation and will be of a higher standard generally. Targeted campaigns are being planned to raise the profile of this scheme amongst students for 2008 which will lead to increasing numbers opting to take up such properties to rent.

We are once again encouraging those of you who have not yet signed up to do so as possible. We appreciate those of you who have signed up for the scheme

Trevor Johnson  
Head of Student Housing

### Students' Union Royal Holloway, University of London

The Runnymede Landlord Accreditation Scheme has been set up by the borough council and aims to recognise and promote good quality, well managed private sector accommodation.

The Students' Union Royal Holloway, University of London, supports this initiative and the benefits it can provide to students in choosing private sector accommodation.

By encouraging students to consider accredited properties of the private sector, students have access to a more informed decision, and would hopefully benefit from the declaration of good dwelling conditions that the accreditation scheme endeavours to assure.

Marcus O'Shea  
Vice President (Education & Welfare)  
SURHUL



## Runnymede Borough Council

Private landlords play a very important role in providing accommodation for those who need a home in the Borough. However being a landlord is not easy and we are committed to doing all that we can to help landlords achieve high standards and to ensure they provide safe and well maintained properties.

Our accreditation scheme establishes a number of standards that need to be maintained and it also makes it clear to those who are seeking a home who they can trust to meet these standards. The scheme is very successful and we now have 84 landlords who we can confidently recommend to students. It is also important that tenants maintain standards. So the accredited landlords will also be issuing their tenants with a 'tenant code'.

We are confident that by making it clear to both parties what is expected of them we will improve landlord and tenant relationships and will minimise the difficulties that can sometimes arise. We are extremely pleased with the progress that has been made on this scheme and look forward to receiving many more requests for accreditation.

Deborah Blowers  
Director of Housing and Community Services



## Tenancy Deposit Protection

From the 6th April 2007 all new tenancy deposits must be protected in a government authorized scheme. This new rule applies if the tenancy is an assured shorthold tenancy. There are three authorised schemes that can be used, for more details please see the details below;

The Deposit Protection Service

[www.depositprotection.com](http://www.depositprotection.com) 0870 7071 707

Tenancy Deposits Solutions Ltd

[www.mydeposits.co.uk](http://www.mydeposits.co.uk) [info@mydeposits.co.uk](mailto:info@mydeposits.co.uk)

The Tenancy Deposit Scheme

[www.tds.gb.com](http://www.tds.gb.com) 0845 226 7837

General Information

[www.direct.gov.uk/tenancydeposit](http://www.direct.gov.uk/tenancydeposit)



If a landlord fails to protect a deposit a tenant can apply to the local county court . The court can then order the landlord to repay the deposit or to protect it in a scheme. If the landlord or agent has not protected the deposit , and they fail to do so within 14 days, they will be ordered to repay the tenant three times the amount of the deposit.

## Inspection of Dwellings

All dwellings we inspect under the accreditation scheme and through service requests are inspected using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The HHSRS deals with a whole range of hazards that might affect the health and safety of the tenants. There are 29 of these hazards in total which are grouped as follows:

- Dampness, excess cold/heat
- Pollutants e.g. asbestos, carbon monoxide, lead
- Lack of space, security or lighting, or excessive noise
- Poor hygiene, sanitation, water supply
- Accidents – falls, electric shocks, fires, burns, scalds
- Collisions, explosions, structural collapse

The process happens in stages.

First an inspector will look around your home and make notes of any hazards. Each hazard will be scored according to how serious it is. Serious hazards are called category 1 hazards and less serious ones category 2. Both categories of hazard are, by definition, worse than the average for that type of hazard.

The scores for the hazards will then help the inspector decide what needs to be done about them. What follows next will vary according to how serious any hazards are.

The first course of action will be to take informal action through correspondence with the landlord, offering advice on what needs rectified and how to achieve the ideal result. If the informal action fails then the most common course of action would be to serve an improvement notice or a prohibition notice depending on the severity of the hazards. If a very serious category 1 hazard is found then a emergency prohibition order may be used. We hope that in most cases the serving of notices is unnecessary and that all landlords see the benefit of ensuring their properties are providing a healthy and safe environment. Accreditation has enabled us to work with landlords to improve the standard of properties without the need for taking formal



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Phone: 01932 425886  
E-mail: [housing@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:housing@runnymede.gov.uk)

If you would like to apply for Accreditation please **contact Private Sector Housing on 01932 425886** and we will send you an application pack.



## Accreditation and Licensing

We recommend that all landlords who use an estate agent to manage their properties get confirmation in writing that the agent has protected tenants deposits.

Thank you to the Landlords who are currently working through the accreditation process we look forward to issuing your accreditation once any required works are completed.

Congratulations to the landlords that have already gained accreditation or have successfully licensed their licensable properties.

Landlords who are not yet accredited please consider the scheme and contact us for more Information and an application pack. From receiving an application if there are no required works accreditation can be issued within a month. If works are required accreditation can be issued when these works are completed.

Mandatory HMO Licensing applies where a building is 3 or more storeys with 5 or more occupants living in multiple occupation. The local authority work actively to identify unlicensed properties which would require a licence and will take appropriate steps when they are identified.

**Please note it is an offence to have control of or manage an HMO which is required to be licensed under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004 but is not so licensed. A person that commits this offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine of up to £20,000.**