

## LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME - PROCEDURE/TOOLKIT GUIDANCE

1.	<b>ISSUE:</b>
	<p>How the authority promotes the benefits of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme to private landlords with dwellings in the Darlington Borough.</p> <p>How the authority deals with increasing the membership of its Landlord Accreditation Scheme, including the appraisal and audit of current accredited landlords and their dwellings.</p> <p>How the authority promotes accredited landlords and their available dwellings as being of a recognised higher standard.</p>
2.	<b>DEFINITION:</b>
	<p>To work in close partnership with landlords and Managing Agents and publicly identify private sector landlords who undertake management practices and service delivery standards in line with recognised good practice and in accordance with the Housing Act 2004.</p> <p>To provide private sector housing that is free from potential hazards and ensure that dwellings in the private sector do not pose a risk to the health and safety of both the occupants and members of the public and to ensure that all properties meet the criteria of the decency standard.</p> <p>Advertise accredited landlords and their available properties to the general public, other relevant Council sections and departments, and other relevant external organisations.</p>
3.	<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSE/PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATION:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a prospective landlord and promote the benefits of becoming a member of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.</li> <li>• Direct the landlord to the Landlord Accreditation Scheme web page on the Darlington Borough Council's website, or post him/her a Landlord Accreditation Scheme application form, list of benefits form and a Code of Standards booklet with a covering letter. Add the landlord's name and contact address, etc., to the Microsoft Access database called 'Landlord information'.</li> <li>• Receive the completed Landlord Accreditation Scheme application form from the landlord. Check that all sections of the application form have been completed correctly including signatures. Set up a file based on the landlord's surname. The file should be split into 5 sections – Application;</li> </ul>

- Confirm receipt of the application form and any safety certificates and arrange appointment(s) to inspect the dwelling(s) - inspect a random selection of 6 dwellings (if applicable), or 10% if over 60 dwellings.
- Undertake the property inspection(s) and complete an inspection report for each dwelling. Gather photographic evidence of any defects/issues. The inspection will establish whether the dwelling has any defects that would create category 1 or 2 hazards in line with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) under the Housing Act 2004, or any minor repair and maintenance issues.
- If there are any hazards/defects at any of the dwellings then the officer will undertake a hazard scoring calculation using the HHSRS Scoring system for each dwelling.
- If the dwellings are not fully compliant then complete a Dwelling Upgrade Plan for each dwelling as necessary. This plan should state the hazards/defects identified, the remedial action required and the timescale for the works to be completed.
- Ensure all up-to-date safety certificates and required documentation, e.g. Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), etc., have been provided by the landlord.
- If membership to the Landlord Accreditation Scheme is refused then send a letter to the landlord stating the reasons for refusal and advising that he/she can appeal against this decision. If the landlord disputes this decision then a written appeal is required from the landlord stating his reasons for this. Once received the appeal letter will be passed to the Landlord Accreditation Scheme Review Panel for a decision.
- If membership to the Landlord Accreditation Scheme is approved, send an e-mail to graphics requesting a Landlord Accreditation Scheme membership Certificate. State the landlord's full name, their membership number, and the date the landlord is accredited from.
- Send the following items to the accredited landlord with a covering letter:-
  - Dwelling Upgrade Plans (if applicable);
  - Landlord Accreditation Scheme membership Certificate;
  - Landlord's pack;
  - Landlord Accreditation Scheme stickers;
  - List of Useful Telephone Numbers;
  - Information leaflets.
- Add the accredited landlord's details to the 'Accredited Landlord list' Word document in the LAS membership folder. E-mail the updated Word document to Julie Wilton so it can be updated on Darlington Borough Council's website and in the Contact Centre.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the ‘Housing Benefits – LAS membership info’ Word document, in the LAS membership folder, with the accredited landlord’s name and property details. E-mail this updated list to Housing Benefits (Tim Head) for their information.</li> <li>• Update the ‘Info for Councillors’ Word document, in the LAS membership folder, with the accredited landlord’s name and property details. E-mail this updated list to the Ward Members (via Claire Hutton, Democratic Services) for their information.</li> <li>• Update the accredited landlord’s details on the Microsoft Access database called ‘Landlord information’.</li> <li>• Re-inspect all properties with a Dwelling Upgrade Plan, when the completion date(s) on the Plan have expired, to ensure the required work has been undertaken.</li> <li>• The landlord will remain accredited for a period of 3 years. Before this period has passed arrange to inspect a random selection of 6 dwellings (if applicable), or 10% if over 60 dwellings, to ensure that the dwellings still meet the standards required for accreditation.</li> </ul>
4.	<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTACT INFORMATION:</b>
	All parties should contact the Private Sector Housing team on (01325) 388304 or email <a href="mailto:las@darlington.gov.uk">las@darlington.gov.uk</a>
5.	<b>PARTNERSHIP LEADS:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darlington Borough Council’s private landlords’ forum</li> <li>• Darlington and District Private Landlords Association (DDPLA)</li> <li>• Darlington Borough Council’s Landlord Accreditation Scheme</li> <li>• ASB Team (including Uniformed Wardens)</li> <li>• Housing management</li> <li>• Homelessness team</li> <li>• First Stop</li> <li>• Gay Advice Darlington (GAD)</li> <li>• Bridge2Home</li> <li>• Managing Agents in the Darlington borough.</li> </ul>