

Newsletter  
Over 28,000 subscribers

Volume 1, Issue 26  
January 2008

[www.LandlordZONE.co.uk](http://www.LandlordZONE.co.uk)

Rental Property Knowledge: a website for Landlords, Letting Agents and Tenants. This site hosts the **UK's busiest rental property forum**

Our sponsor for this issue is [Cover4LetProperty.co.uk](http://Cover4LetProperty.co.uk) one of the leading insurers in the rental property field. Why not ask for a quote next time?

**0800 9707 172**

### Inside this issue:

<i>Welcome—the Editor—Tom Entwistle</i>	1
<i>Gas Checks—our January Topic</i>	1
<i>Carbon Monoxide Risks</i>	2
<i>Gas Safety</i>	2
<i>Gas Safety Management in Practice</i>	3
<i>Book Review—Gas Safety</i>	4
<i>Next Month—Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)</i>	5
<i>Landlord's News</i>	6
<i>Insurance advice from our sponsor: <a href="http://Cover4LetProperty.co.uk">Cover4LetProperty.co.uk</a></i>	7

# LandlordZONE

RENTAL PROPERTY KNOWLEDGE

## Welcome:

**Happy New Year everyone**—let's hope it's a good one for landlords, though the signs are it's a likely to be very tough in the economy for everyone: landlords, businesses and consumers alike.

The commercial sector seems to have taken the biggest hit so far with CB Richard Ellis reporting a 4.1% drop in values in December alone and 10.3% in Q4 2007.

Couple this with tough trading conditions going forward and it doesn't appear that we have reached the bottom on the high street yet.

Those investors who helped pump £5billion into commercial property funds over the last 2 years—the likes of New Star, Norwich Union and Scottish Widows funds—have lost 15 to 20% of their value. REITs have fared even worse—British Land and Land Securities REITs have fallen by 44.9 and 35.2% respectively.

Residential property values have so far fared better. But with UK house prices the most

overinflated in the world, according to research by Policy Exchange, a correction or at least a long "flat" market seems inevitable.

House prices in Britain have risen for 13 years on the run with average prices going from £70,000 in 1997, when labour came into power, to just under 200,000 today—a rate of more than 4% above inflation—a compounded increase of around 180% Historically, values go in 20 year cycles and it's unlikely to be different this time. But despite the gloom and the pain felt by Northern Rock and Paragon Mortgages, it's possible the liquidity crunch, which has brought far more expensive mortgages, may yet be contained?

If that's the case, and there's still a very big but, there are some positives:

- inter-bank credit spreads returning to normal
- employment levels still high
- reasonable growth prospects
- a house building program which will fall short of fore-



cast demand of 3.5m homes - 2 further cuts in interest rates forecast—then we may get away with a flat property market for a year or three, avoiding a real crash? However, this week's stocks sell-off is a real worry for the UK economy.

But falling stocks & property prices says there will eventually be bargains around for those brave enough.

Most landlords are sanguine—they take a long term view. Recent figures from A&L show that 1 in 10 landlords is employed so they see their properties as an investment for the future rather than part of their income. More than two-thirds of landlords surveyed say they are buying more properties. The Editor.

## Gas Checks—The January Topic

Despite all the economic gloom the chances of an investor landlord losing his shirt are far less than might be imagined, if you keep your nerve and cut running costs.

Tenant demand is holding up very well and demographic and economic factors bode well for the future of renting.

The key to success is keeping your properties occupied with good reliable tenants and maintaining that all-important cash flow.

However, when times get tough economies may be needed and one of the biggest is taking on the management of the property yourself—DIY property management is not rocket science—it boils down to preparation, some extra work and common sense.

What landlords sometimes forget is their biggest risk of all comes from claims against them for negligence.

Landlords who manage have responsibilities which must be

complied with and they **MUST** carry adequate Landlord's Insurance—normal household insurance policies will just not do it!

The horrific case of the scalded baby is a case in point—see News—and one of the main responsibilities on a landlord's shoulders is Gas Checks.

In this issue we look at some of the important aspects of ensuring that gas is safe in your properties.

## Who is vulnerable to Carbon Monoxide?

CORGI has produced a report that pinpoints the areas and groups of people most vulnerable to the exposure of carbon monoxide (CO). The report shows that **between January 2006 and April 2007, there were 102 carbon monoxide incidents claiming 50 lives and causing 218, often long-term, injuries.** Lack of centralised reporting plus undiagnosed cases passing through the healthcare system means the overall figures will be much higher.

The Worst Hit Regions: The Midlands, North East, Wales and Yorkshire are the worst

affected regions in the UK, reporting the most incidents per head of population.

Vulnerable Groups: "The elderly and the young have been identified as vulnerable groups as they are more susceptible and **tenants have also been highlighted due to the risks that tenants face in the hands of some lazy and ignorant private landlords.**"

Consumer Awareness: The general public are also at risk from their startling lack of knowledge of the deadly danger of carbon monoxide. For instance, CORGI's consumer research reveals that 90% of

the country has a smoke alarm but almost three quarters of the UK does not have a carbon monoxide alarm and alarmingly 3% of people do not even know what one is.

Recommendations: Carbon monoxide poisoning can be caused by blocked flues and chimneys, faulty appliances, installation faults, owner error and even weather conditions. Counter measures recommended to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisonings include **fitting a carbon monoxide alarm**, statutory gas checks and servicing appliances annually.



[CORGI Carbon Monoxide Report](#)

## LettingAgent.com

An initiative by Award Winning Landlord Mortgages.

The service is very flexible and provides effective property management at a fraction of the cost of traditional Letting Agents.

Renting out a property can be a lot harder than it looks. Long-term landlords need to treat rentals as a business and run it professionally. You also need to be ready to tackle several challenges in a competitive market – a company such as **LettingAgent.com** can help you overcome each of them.

20,000 Landlords now have access to this highly competitive service.

The Let-Only service is particularly popular (3% of gross rent).

Available throughout the UK. For details call **0800 183 0070** or visit the website



## Gas Safety

As a landlord or property manager the last thing you want is to have someone's death or injury on your conscience.

This is without the added worry of a criminal prosecution and a civil action for damages against you.

Given the incidence of carbon monoxide poisoning and accidents involving gas it can so easily happen, but not if you take basic precautions and carry out your duties responsibly.

There's no requirement to

have the electrical system or smoke alarms checked annually as with gas, but as you are still responsible if the system is unsafe it's a good idea to have these checked also.

Some gas engineers will check the electrical systems, alarms and appliances at the same time as they do the gas checks—it's a very worthwhile extra.

The requirements are that installations and appliances are properly installed and maintained (serviced regu-

larly) and that checks are carried out every 12 months by a registered CORGI engineer.

The gas check must be current (within the last 12 months) when the tenant enters the premises and throughout their period of occupation.

The tenant must also be given a copy of the current CORGI gas check certificate when the tenancy starts and within 28 days when the new 12 monthly gas check is carried out.

**LandlordMONEY**  
SECURE PROPERTY FINANCE



**Cover4LetProperty**  
Specialist Landlords Insurance

**0800 9707 172**  
**Click Here For Your**  
**Immediate Online Quote!**

## Looking for Below-Market-Value Properties With Long-Term Tenants?

- **BUY THE NAME, ADDRESS, POSTCODE & COURT DATE OF HOMEOWNERS FACING REPOSSESSION**
- **SIMPLY PAY FOR THE LEAD - NO FINDERS FEE**

Motivated sellers are at the heart of the below-market-value industry. One of the most motivated of all sellers are people in the process of, or about to be, repossessed. Often selling considerably below the current market value and remaining as long-term tenants.

**REGISTER NOW TO SECURE INTRODUCTORY OFFER**

[www.Repossession-Leads.co.uk](http://www.Repossession-Leads.co.uk) - The UK's Premier Supplier of Quality Repossession Leads to the Property Investment Industry

## Prime Repossession Leads

- Within 14-28+ days of Court Hearing
- Over 200 Court Areas in 25 Regions
- Massive £££ Discount Potential

[www.Repossession-Leads.co.uk](http://www.Repossession-Leads.co.uk)

**FIND OUT MORE**  
- [Click Here Now](#) -

## Gas Safety Management in Practice

Landlords or their agents have a **common law duty** to ensure that gas installations and appliances supplied in their properties are safe and they must arrange annual Gas Safety Checks by a registered CORGI installer.

In practice various difficulties arise and where a lot of properties are involved a proper management system needs to be in place.

Where staff are involved there is a need for awareness training, reminders need to be automatic (ideally through property management software) and a record keeping system needs to be maintained.

Some important points to consider:

- Implement a system of annual checks and maintenance for all gas appliances and flues.
- Use only CORGI registered engineers for installations, maintenance and gas safety checks.
- Maintain safety check records, keeping copies for at least 2 years, and issuing copies to each tenant within 28 days.
- If you use a managing agent make sure the contract makes it clear who is responsible for managing gas safety checks.

- Make sure that appliances are safe and have been checked within 12 months before re-letting.
- On re-letting, remove any suspect appliances which may have been left by previous tenants and issue the new tenant/s with a copy of the safety check record on entry.
- On re-letting, even if a safety certificate is still current, visually inspect the gas installation and appliances. A leaving tenant may have left the system in an unsafe condition.
- Work closely with tenants in gaining access for maintenance, repairs, safety checks and the early reporting of faulty appliances.
- Ensure that all appliances meet the general regulation requirements, in particular in bedrooms and bathrooms where appliances must be of the room-sealed type or have a safety valve incorporated.
- Ensure that all water heaters have fail safe thermostats fitted.
- Do not use second hand gas appliances.
- Ensure that tenants have emergency instructions and ready access to the gas meter and the gas cut-off valve.

- Provide copies of all appliance manufacturer's operating instructions to your tenants.
  - If an appliance fails the safety check the CORGI safety check record will note the defect and the engineer will disconnect the appliance.
  - You must have the fault rectified or the appliance replaced before re-connecting. This means you will need to act fast if the tenant is not to be without heating or hot water.
  - Give tenants plenty of notice that an engineer will call and try to work with them on times etc as many tenants are at work week-days.
  - If you experience difficulties gaining access make sure you fully document this to show you have taken all reasonable steps and inform both the environmental health officer and the H&S Executive.
  - Beware accusations of harassment, so never be tempted to force entry or enter without the tenant's permission—you could be accused of harassment.
- Carrying out due diligence in this way, and keeping all necessary paper evidence, means you have a good defence in case of any incident.



[Gas Safety in Rental Property](#)

[CORGI Carbon Monoxide Report](#)

[Haringey Council Use Safety Tape](#)



**Cover4LetProperty**  
Specialist Landlords Insurance

**0800 9707 172**  
**Click Here For Your Immediate Online Quote!**

## Discount Property Auction

*Save £££'s. Buy at discount property auction*

*DiscountPropertyAuction.co.uk can save you thousands on your next investment property.*

- No new builds. Buy direct from the homeowner
- Buy vacant properties & sell and rent back
- Online auction site. Outbid fellow members
- Numerous properties ? Independent valuations

Click here to visit [www.discountpropertyauction.co.uk](http://www.discountpropertyauction.co.uk) now.

Join now and pay no joining fee and get your first month free!

**Buy below market value**  
[www.discountpropertyauction.co.uk](http://www.discountpropertyauction.co.uk)

## Review: The Lettings Market & Gas Safety

**Deanna Levine** who is a consultant solicitor and an experienced property manager has produced a unique guide to gas safety "What landlords, managing agents and tenants need to know about gas safety in residential property"

Deanna has previously acted for landlords involved in court cases for gas safety matters.

She also conducts in-house seminars based on the book, training staff who are engaged in property management.

The book can be purchased and seminars booked through her web site at:  
[www.thelettingsmarket.com](http://www.thelettingsmarket.com)

The books covers gas safety duties and responsibilities of

landlords, managing agents and tenants in England & Wales. The legislation is virtually identical for Scotland also.

What differences there are for Scotland is explained in the text.

After a brief introduction to the legislation itself—the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998, and The Approved Code of Practice it explains briefly the types of property involved.

There's a chapter on the types of appliances covered by the legislation including appliances and fittings.

The Duties of the Landlord and Managing Agents are described in some details as is the information required in the Gas Safety Record.

A special mention is made of arrangements for gas appliances in bathrooms and bedrooms and for responsibilities for non-domestic (commercial premises)

There are guidelines on providing training for staff involved in property management and a useful section on defences to prosecution.

The guide explains tenant's responsibilities and has suggestions for clauses to be included in the Tenancy Agreement as well as a very useful a tenant's warning notice.

A very useful little guide which every landlord and managing agent could benefit from studying.

At £4.99 including postage and packaging the book certainly worth having—Editor.



**Deanna Levine** is a solicitor and popular lecturer who has worked in the Legal Departments of Shell, Mobil and British Gas. She also holds a part-time judicial appointment and manages a property company.

[www.thelettingsmarket.com](http://www.thelettingsmarket.com)



## Money Back Mortgages

In 2006 [www.moneybackmortgages.com](http://www.moneybackmortgages.com) was set up to give consumers like you an impartial service where you can search for and arrange your next mortgage with the added benefit of receiving 50% of the commission received by us.

The website has proved particularly helpful for **Buy to Let landlords** who generally remortgage on a regular basis to lower their monthly mortgage costs. With interest rates increasing, here is a way of lowering your remortgage costs.

If you arrange your next Buy To Let mortgage through us you can expect to receive on average £337.09 per property\*\*.

\*\* This represents the commission payable to clients who have arranged a Buy to Let mortgage through us. Correct as of October 2007.

**MoneyBackMortgages.com** is a trading style of Quay FS Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

Registered in England and Wales Company Number 5772066. Think carefully before securing other debts against your home. Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage.

**MoneyBack  
Mortgages.com**

## Landlord Manager

### Landlord Manager V2

Visionbase software Limited have been producing property management software since 1995 and is therefore one of the older established software products producers aimed specifically at landlords. The latest version of **Landlord Manager**, which has just been announced, uses a simple user interface to allow you to record property income and expenditure for any number of properties. With numerous drill down facilities, reports and graphs you can easily track the pro-

gress of your rented property. Other features include a Rent Centre that will track your tenants and their outstanding rents as well as the ability to print tenancy agreements and section 21 notices. An Alert Centre records those critical events such as safety checks. The program is designed to help you complete SA105 an SA801 tax returns. You can also track VAT transactions and export your data to a Sage compatible file to give to your account-

There's a Multi Currency facility for those with properties let in virtually any country in the world. Multiple drill-down reports give you important data at a click of a button and will save you valuable time and money, keeping you on top of your portfolio at all times. Another useful feature is the ability to synchronise your details with Microsoft Outlook ensuring you don't forget critical events and easily transfer contacts. You can download a free evaluation copy at:

[landlord-manager.co.uk](http://landlord-manager.co.uk)



## Hammersmith & Fulham Direct Lettings

### Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham's Direct Lettings for Landlords

A rent deposit guarantee scheme that was launched in April 2003 and has ensured that over seven hundred households have entered into Private Sector tenancies.

Our aim is to assist families who are deemed capable of maintaining a Private Sector Tenancy by providing an rent deposit guarantee and in-borough housing benefit 'fast-tracking'.

We have been working hard in partnership with private landlords and lettings agents but due to the increased popularity of the scheme we have a growing number of applicants which are currently outnumbering our portfolio of available properties.

## Landlords!



### Do you have a property to let in Hammersmith & Fulham?

#### We offer you:

- Competitive rents
- Housing benefit direct payments
- Rent deposit guarantee
- No lettings agents' or administration fees
- Free advice on managing the tenancy
- Non-refundable incentive paid up front
- 'Better homes grant'.

For more details contact the direct lettings team at Hammersmith & Fulham on 020 8753 4166 or email: [direct.lettings@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:direct.lettings@lbhf.gov.uk) for more information. [www.lbhf.gov.uk](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk)

## Next Month—Energy Performance Certificates

The February issue of the LandlordZONE Newsletter will look at the implications of Energy Performance Certificates which will be introduced later this year.

EPCs are for all buildings and will be required whenever a building is constructed, rented or sold.

The Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is similar to the labels provided with do-

mestic appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines.

Their purpose is to record just how energy efficient a property is as a building. The certificate will provide a rating of the energy efficiency and carbon emissions of the building on a scale from A to G, where A is very efficient and G is very inefficient.

An EPC will be accompanied

by a recommendation report listing other measures (such as low and zero carbon generating systems) to improve the energy rating of the building.

The EPC is to be produced by a national team of Energy Assessors who have qualified to do this work.

EPCs will be phased in in stages from 6 April 2008 to 1st October 2008.



## Crimson Investments Property Investment – the easy way !

We offer the following services:

- \*Discounts of 15% - 20% with typical savings of £25,000 on each purchase.
- \*New build properties from major developers.
- \*Low deposit down deals.
- \*Specialist Mortgage Brokers & Solicitors.
- \*Our 'Ready to Let Service' – furnishing packages.
- \*Appointing the letting agents.
- \*Continuing support with your property after purchase.

Crimson deal with all of the day-to-day issues involved in purchasing your property, so you truly are an armchair investor. Visit—[www.crimsoninvestments.co.uk](http://www.crimsoninvestments.co.uk)



### What's in the News for Landlords?

The Government admits it has no idea what the impact of the removal of **empty rates relief** on commercial property might be! According to Property Week the financial secretary from the Treasury, Jane Kennedy, says no estimates are available. From next April owners of industrial premises will have just six months' exemption and office and retail premises only three months. This news has further outraged the business community who have argued the move will stop development, damage regeneration and force some landlords and companies out of business.

**ARLA's 4th quarter review 2007** concludes that "Buy to Let landlords have not been shaken by the credit crunch". Nine out of 10 surveyed have no intention of selling their properties for nearly 17 years. Four out of 10 of them expect to invest further. "This is good news for the whole of the Private Rented Sector and for the housing market, particularly as it comes from surveys carried out well after the credit crunch had begun to bite," commented ARLA's Head of Operations, Ian Potter. "The rental sector is the lynchpin for all our housing requirements and needs continual investment from private individuals as it still suffers from a lack of investment from the institutions."

A **free Dispute Resolution Service** is to be offered in London as a pilot scheme by Wandsworth Citizen's Advice Bureau in partnership with HM Courts Service (HMCS). The idea is that the DRS will help landlords and others to resolve disputes without going to court, saving money and time. The service offers free confidential advice by trained staff. The government is committed to promoting alternative methods thereby relieving pressure on the courts, such as this form of mediation. You can find information on the service here: [www.disputeresolutionservice.co.uk](http://www.disputeresolutionservice.co.uk)

10 January 2008—Rhianna Hardie, the baby who suffered 95% burns when a **faulty heating system exploded** above her cot would not have died had the Government informed her family's landlords of a similar tragedy four years earlier. Coroner Michael Rose, sitting in Taunton, urged anyone with a boiler with an **outmoded thermostat** to check their heating system for a potentially fatal fault. Mr Rose told the inquest: "If this incident gets the publicity that it appears to be receiving, virtually every householder in the UK should look at their thermostat and if it doesn't comply with current British standards, replace it as a matter of urgency."

### Landlord & Buy to Let Show 18/19 April 2007 Olympia, London

If you are serious about making money from being a landlord or buy-to-let investor, you can't afford to miss this event. Everything landlords and buy-to-let investors need under one roof.

40 FREE seminars by industry experts. Where and when to invest. How to avoid bad tenants, Tax planning, The latest legislation, 70 LEADING SUPPLIERS exhibiting the latest products & services. Money: the latest buy-to-let mortgages & landlord insurance. Property: UK and overseas property. Legislation: government agencies, specialist lawyers, tax experts. Goods & Services: great deals, buy-to-let furniture, safety, kitchens, supplies. Marketing: online services, future market conditions,

FREE ADMISSION saving you time & money, Better than spending hours on the internet.

[www.landlordshow.com](http://www.landlordshow.com)





Newsletter

Over 28,000 subscribers

This publication is the Copyright of  
Parkmatic Publications Limited,  
2007—all rights reserved

Phone: 0845 260 4420

Fax: 0870 199 2697

E-mail: editor(at)landlordzone.co.uk

Volume 1, Issue 26

January 2008

[Newsletter Archive](#)

**7-9 March 2008 (at ExCeL  
London) The Homebuyer &  
Property Investor Show**

The Homebuyer Events 2008 property exhibition calendar commences, as always, with The Homebuyer (& Property Investor) Show 2008. Now in its 17th year, it is the UK's largest and longest running dedicated property show. It has a proven track record in attracting the most active investors and owner-occupiers in the market.

A magnet for buyers on every step of the property ladder, around 14,000 visitors are expected to attend the 2008 show, attracted by the broad range of UK and overseas property on offer from over 250 exhibitors.

Further information for exhibitors call our sales team on

+44 (0) 20 8877 3636

## Multiple Insurance Quotations are just a click away!



**Cover4LetProperty.co.uk** specialises in insurance for residential and commercial landlords. By inputting simple details of your property or portfolio just once onto the Cover4LetProperty online quote form, you can access up to five quotes instantly.

**Cover4LetProperty.co.uk** is a trading style of Alan Blunden & Co. Ltd. Insurance brokers, who arranged over **40,000 insurance policies for landlords in the UK.**

**Cover4LetProperty.co.uk** uses a panel of insurers, selecting the most appropriate ones for your property.

Or you can call [Cover4LetProperty.co.uk](http://Cover4LetProperty.co.uk) on **0800 9 70 71 72** and we will quote you without obligation for your single property or portfolio.

**Cover4LetProperty.co.uk** is able to offer cover for: Residential flats, houses—Commercial shops, offices, Industrial units, Vacant properties, Blocks of flats, Bed-sits, DSS, asylum seekers, students, Holiday homes, etc.

**Save time and money – use [Cover4LetProperty.co.uk](http://Cover4LetProperty.co.uk) specialists in landlord property insurance.**

## AccommodationforStudents.com

The UK's leading web site for Students and Student Landlords

### Landlords:

- Advertise your properties quickly and easily, for just £5 per property per month. (Discounts are available for bulk uploads and long advertising periods).
- Include images, maps, features, pricing, contact details, and more
- We display performance reports and track the enquiries made by students about your properties
- 1000s of emails are sent by our student visitors to landlords on our site everyday.
- Over 5000 student landlords already registered and using our site.

[Click here to create an account now](#)



**Property Tax Portal** was founded in September 2003 by Amer Siddiq who is the managing director of the parent company Tax Portal Ltd. Amer, a former IT professional and property investor himself, is supported by a team of highly qualified tax professionals. They produce the highly successful Landlords Property Tax Manager Software and now run regular Tax Seminars for Landlords and Property Investors. The website is packed full of useful information and products to help minimise your tax payments.



**L**andlordZONE® - Helping Landlords since 1999 - a website for landlords, tenants & letting agents.  
If you would prefer not to receive these e-mails please click the **UNSUBSCRIBE** link at the bottom of every e-mail newsletter we send out.. Articles in all our publications are general information only and don't cover every case or issue. We try to keep information accurate and up-to-date but we cannot guarantee this is always the case. Always seek expert professional advice before making or not making decisions.