

Private Renting Matters

Welcome

From the Chair, to issue 6 of Private Renting Matters.

Shared Houses and Planning Consent



Chris Watson of Development Control attended the meeting to explain recent changes to planning rules affecting small shared houses and outlined how Plymouth City Council would be

approaching the changes. He detailed background rationale:-

- It is important to realise that consent is needed not only for building new structures but also the intended use of such a building.
- There are a number of 'classes' of use and changes from one to another generally requires consent from the local authority.
- There was concern nationally about the 'uncontrolled' spread of student housing throughout residential areas.
- National consultation took place on the best way to deal with this situation.
- Use Class C3 includes family homes and used to include shared houses with up to 6 unrelated occupiers.
- There is now a new use Class – C4 which covers 3 – 6 persons sharing and consent is now needed to change from C3 to C4.
- The definition of house in multiple occupation used for this purpose is that found in the Housing Act 2004 and most of the properties would already have been considered to be HMOs by the Private Rented Team so no 'new' health and safety standards" would be required as a result of the change in planning law.
- The changes are not retrospective but only affect changes of use from 6 April 2010.
- Changing from C4 to C3 does not need consent.
- Over the next few months Plymouth City Council will develop a policy to guide officers in the implementation of

Support for ex-service personnel

At a previous meeting concern had been expressed that ex-service personnel were struggling to adapt to life as a civilian. Three support agencies attended to outline their work.

Mark Rickman - Royal British Legion

Mark advised that their main activity used to be to provide deposits and rent in advance to help ex-service personnel settle into new accommodation.

They found that a number of tenancies failed and now try to use a more sustainable approach. They work with other support groups such as Alabare and PATH in order to ensure that people have the skills and knowledge they need in order to adapt to life outside the Services.

Generally they find the standard of accommodation in Plymouth is good, although referencing can be expensive and they are grateful to those agencies that work with them in a positive and realistic way. If notified early in the tenancy, when things seem to be going wrong, they may be able to pull things back. Usually they need accommodation for 12 – 20 people per month and will assist anyone who has been in the Forces even if only for one week.

They are always glad to be notified of available property – Mark can be contacted at MRickman@britishlegion.org.uk

Richard Nixon - Alabare

this change.

- An application to change use will cost £335 (standard fee) and a decision should be made within 6 – 8 weeks.
- Queries can be addressed to Chris at chris.watson@plymouth.gov.uk or on 01752 304367

Annie Haggie - PATH

Produced for the Private Rented Forum by
Westcountry Landlords Association

Alabare are funded by the British Legion to run hostel accommodation for ex-service personnel as prior to them settling in the private rented sector. Clients may stay just a few weeks, or for many months until they are ready to move on.

This gives a degree of stability and allows some of the barriers to settling to be addressed and skills acquired. Alabare are also looking for partnerships with local agents to help people move on. Referrals into the project are taken from a wide range of agencies. When placing clients in private rented accommodation the team will always be aware of potential problems – they need to do this in order to give a tenancy the best possible chance of success. Richard can be contacted at r.nixon@alabare.co.uk



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