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SOLICITORS

What if...

I want to let a property to a group of students

Last month, we explored what companies need to do if they want to sell alcohol as part of their business. This month, we take a look at what landlords should consider when letting a property to a group of students.



Simon Crack

Letting a property to university students can have a number of great benefits. However, there are a number of additional rules and regulations that you, as a landlord, will need to comply with if you are letting a property to a group of students (or other group of individual tenants) – which come on top of standard buy-to-let obligations.

Firstly, if there are three or more tenants in a property forming more than one household, and these tenants share toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities, you will need to follow the rules governing a house in multiple occupation (HMO). Amongst other things, you will need to:

- Provide the required information to tenants;
- Install working smoke alarms;
- Arrange a fire risk assessment;
- Install carbon monoxide alarms;
- Carry out annual gas safety checks;
- Arrange electrical checks once every five years;
- Ensure any electrical items are PAT-tested;
- Make sure the property is not overcrowded;
- Ensure there are appropriate cooking and bathroom facilities for the number of people living there;
- Keep communal areas and shared facilities clean and in good repair; and
- Make sure there are enough rubbish bins/bags.

If the property is at least three storeys high, there are at least five tenants living there forming more than one household and they all share a toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities, the property will be considered a 'large HMO'. This will require the property to be licenced by the local council.

Some local councils have additional requirements to be met, including obtaining permission if the property is changing from a 'dwelling house' (Use Class C3) to a 'HMO' (Use Class C4). The City of York Council requires all licence holders to attend and pass a training course within one year of their licence being issued/renewed. If you fail to licence a HMO you can be fined and ordered to repay up to 12 months' rent.

Remember, if you choose to use a University Accommodation Office when letting out the property, they may also have additional conditions for you to meet.

Fortunately, Hethertons has the local knowledge to help, no matter how difficult it might seem at first. For specialist advice, please contact Hethertons Solicitors on **01904 528200** and speak to **David Scott**.

 #aNewShapeOfLawyer