

Landlord Accreditation Schemes in the East Midlands: Summary of DASH report carried out in May 2006

Overview

Currently, accreditation schemes that are in operation appear to mostly be limited to student accommodation where individual houses, rather than landlords are accredited. The schemes mostly require some form of home security requirements, and most are limited to one type of property, usually HMOs.

Cost of Membership

60% of landlords would be willing to pay for membership. Currently, 73% of schemes in operation have a membership cost.

Standards

Overall, local authorities and landlords agree that accreditation scheme standards should be higher than general housing standards. The majority of landlords also agreed that they should be assessed in some way themselves, in addition to the property, but only 45% felt that training days were appropriate, preferring instead to concentrate on checks to ensure they are 'fit and proper'. 92% of local authorities would want their accreditation scheme to include some form of 'fit and proper' person check, but 92% of local authorities surveyed also stated their desire to educate landlords as well as assess their properties. Clearly, a method has to be found to inform landlords that does not involve training days, or at least keeps them to a minimum.

"Green" Policies

There was an even 50/50 split amongst landlords as to whether or not accreditation schemes should have 'green' policies, while 92% of local authorities surveyed would include 'green' policies in any new accreditation scheme. This suggests that local authorities need to convince some landlords of the importance of this issue and also illustrates the growth of 'green' policies. Of those accreditation schemes that are up and running, only 55% have any form of 'green' policy.

Benefits of Membership

95% of landlord respondents would expect tangible benefits to joining an accreditation scheme, over and above increased marketability, while only 27% of schemes actually provide this.

Tenant Accreditation

The desire for some form of good tenant scheme is far more evident among landlords and agents than it is within local authorities, with 75% of landlords and agents being willing to contribute assessments to such a scheme, but there are currently no tenant accreditation schemes in operation in the sample areas, and only 33% of local authorities would consider some form of tenant accreditation.

Management of Schemes

While 45% of landlords would want the local authority to manage the accreditation scheme, 40% would rather the scheme was managed by a housing association or similar body. When questioned, 84% of local authorities who do not have an accreditation scheme stated that they would want to manage the scheme themselves.

Demand for Schemes

The desire to set up and be part of an accreditation scheme seems to be very high, with 92% of local authorities surveyed being interested in using an accreditation template, and 89% of landlords who are not currently part of an accreditation scheme are willing to join one if the perceived benefits and circumstances were correct. Of the landlords surveyed, 55% were already members of an accreditation scheme and 70% of landlords sampled had HMO's within their portfolio, the traditional target of accreditation schemes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears that there is a lot of common ground between local authorities and landlords in regard to accreditation schemes. Landlords are willing to increase the standards of their properties and pay to be members of the scheme as many local authorities request. In return, the local authority must provide tangible benefits for accredited landlords to provide value for money and to make the scheme a success.