Working together for positive change
A one day conference exploring opportunities to work together for a better private rented sector

15 November 2017
Skainos Centre

headline sponsor
Jon Anderson is Group Director of Growth with Choice Housing Association. Jon joined Choice in January 2017 with a remit to expand their operations into both the private rental sector and within the residential development market. He has primarily worked within the private sector with roles including commercial and residential property management, development consultancy, investment appraisal and land acquisition. Jon has first-hand knowledge of the risks and challenges facing the private rented sector and is actively engaged in a programme of growth.

John Blackwood is Chief Executive of the Scottish Association of Landlords (SAL). John has worked in the private rented sector for over 20 years and is widely recognised as one of the foremost experts on all aspects of the Scottish private rented sector. He represents SAL on a number of Scottish Government committees working to inform and influence housing policy. John is also managing director of Gladstones Property Investment Managers and chairman of Scotland’s national accreditation scheme for private landlords and letting agents, Landlord Accreditation Scotland (LAS).

John Crabbe is vice chair of Landlord Association of Northern Ireland. John is vice chair of LANI and has been a private landlord for the past 16 years both in England and Northern Ireland. After finishing university in Edinburgh, he moved to London where he worked as a software developer. In 2009 he returned to Northern Ireland, got to know Belfast and made it his home. He joined Landlord Association of Northern Ireland in 2014.

Jim Frazer is with Northern Ireland Trading Standards Service. Jim has been with NI Trading Standards Service since 2001. From 2014, Jim has developed a particular interest in the application of consumer protection law in the regulation of the private rented sector, and more specifically in the application of unfair terms legislation to the terms and conditions used in tenancy agreements between letting agents/landlords and tenants. Jim engages with other enforcers and public and private stakeholders in relation to the regulation of the private rented sector in NI.

Joe Frey is Research Consultant and Visiting Professor with Ulster University. Joe Frey was employed by the Housing Executive for 35 years. Between 1998 and 2016 he was Head of Research. Since leaving the Housing Executive, Joe has been a consultant on a number of housing market research projects and is currently Chair of the Department of Communities Housing Market Symposium. He has recently been appointed Visiting Professor to Ulster University where he is a part-time lecturer as well as continuing with his PhD on housing market analysis and the PRS.

Professor Paddy Gray is from the School of the Built Environment at Ulster University. Paddy Gray has wide experience of academic and applied research with over 200 publications on housing related issues. He has acted as Expert Advisor to government and regularly sits on strategic panels. In 2010 he was appointed the first ever Irish President of the Chartered Institute of Housing UK. Recent research has included extensive work on the private rented sector. In 2017 he was named the top power player in housing in the UK by 24Housing.

Bethan Jones is the Operational Manager of Rent Smart Wales. Bethan leads Cardiff Council’s response to Part 1 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (brand name Rent Smart Wales) following the designation of Cardiff Council as the Single Licensing Authority for delivery of the legislation across Wales. Her previous experience includes private and public sector housing work. A key aspect of her work throughout her career has involved nurturing partnerships with local landlords, voluntary organisations, and universities.

Severina Kelley is the Co-ordinator of Landlord Advice. Severina is Co-ordinator of Landlord Advice, a free advice service for Landlords piloted by Housing Rights on behalf of the Department for Communities. Severina has worked with Housing Rights since 2015, and has advised and engaged with people from all areas of the private rented sector in that time. Prior to joining Housing Rights, Severina worked as Barrister after qualifying in 2011. During her time at the Bar, Severina worked on a wide range of legal cases including civil and contractual disputes.
Alison MacDougall is Managing Director of TDS Northern Ireland. Alison has been involved in dispute resolution for over 12 years, including senior positions at the Police Complaints Authority and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Alison joined TDS in 2007 as an adjudicator and is now responsible for the operational management of the dispute resolution team, including disputes arising in Northern Ireland. In June 2017, Alison was appointed Managing Director of TDS Northern Ireland.

Natasha Miller is the Development Officer for Shelter Scotland’s Letting Agent Plus. Natasha Miller is the development officer for Shelter Scotland’s Letting Agent Plus pilot project aimed at improving access to, and sustainability of, tenancies within the private rented sector across the central belt of Scotland. Prior to joining Shelter Scotland’s policy team, Natasha worked within the organisation’s advice services providing housing, money, debt and fuel poverty advice and representation.

John-Mark McCafferty is Chief Executive with Threshold. John-Mark McCafferty has been Chief Executive with Threshold, the National Housing Charity, since January 2017. Threshold’s aim is to prevent homelessness through advice, tenancy protection and advocacy. Prior to Threshold John-Mark was Head of Social Justice and Policy with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, working on policies including income, utilities policy, child poverty, financial inclusion, housing and sustainable development.

Brian Robson is Acting Head of Policy and Research at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF). Brian Robson leads JRF’s programme on Housing and Poverty. The programme aims to set out policy and practice approaches to enable more effective housing responses for those living in poverty in the UK. Before joining JRF in February 2015, Brian worked in policy roles at the Northern Housing Consortium and National Housing Federation. His career in housing began at a large London housing association and included spells working in housing management, stock transfer and service improvement.

Lizzie Scott is Research and Development Officer at Housing Rights. Lizzie is a member of Housing Rights’ Policy & Practice team. Lizzie has worked with Housing Rights since 2016, developing the capacity of the organisation to evaluate the impact of its services; and, undertaking research to inform and influence its work. Most recently, Lizzie has led Housing Rights’ research into dispute resolution, publishing a stakeholder-informed report which proposes a model for an alternative dispute resolution service for the private rented sector in Northern Ireland.

Brian Speers is Managing Partner at CCD Solicitors. Brian is one of the most experienced legal mediators in Northern Ireland. Brian has been interviewed on various print and broadcast media about mediation and has written extensively about mediation particularly in the journal of the Law Society of Northern Ireland. He has contributed the Northern Ireland chapter for the book Mediation in the EU. He was on the mediation sub-committee for the Review of Civil Justice in Northern Ireland conducted by Lord Justice Gillen.

Trevor Wright is Learning and Development Officer at the Chartered Institute for Housing NI. Trevor is responsible for the ‘Learning to Let’ programme, the CIH Level 2 Award in Letting and Managing Residential Property. Trevor has almost 30 years experience within the voluntary and community sector, working with a range of service users including people who are homeless or have an offending background, people recovering from mental ill health, young people and families at risk.

Stephen Leonard is Environmental Health Manager at Belfast City Council. Stephen is the Environmental Health Manager within Belfast City Council’s City & Neighbourhood Services Department. He is responsible for enforcing Housing standards in the private rented sector. Stephen is the City Council’s lead in relation to the transfer of HMO licensing to Councils.

Lizzie Scott is Research and Development Officer at Housing Rights.
09.15 Registration & coffee

Chairperson: Paddy Gray, Ulster University

09.45 Welcome and overview
  Janet Hunter, Director of Housing Rights

09.50 Update on the private rented sector consultation
  Senior representative from Department for Communities

10:05 Poverty and the private rented sector
  Brian Robson, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

10.35 The need for a collaborative approach to providing the evidence
  Joe Frey, Ulster University

10.50 Coffee break

11.05 Challenges and opportunities in the private rented sector
  Jon Anderson, Choice Housing

11.25 A role for alternative dispute resolution in the private rented sector?
  Brian Speers LLB, CCD Solicitors

11.50 Letting Agent Plus: Improving access to, and sustainability of, tenancies within the private rented sector in Scotland
  Natasha Miller, Shelter Scotland

12.10 Q&A / Panel Discussion - Delivering change for the sector
  Morning speakers with the addition of Lizzie Scott (Housing Rights), Alison MacDougall (TDS), John-Mark McCafferty (Threshold).

12.45 Lunch

13.30 Supporting tenants to sustain tenancies - what should a tenant information pack contain?
  Private Tenants’ Forum

13.50 Private letting - a Scottish perspective
  John Blackwood, Scottish Landlords Association

14:20 A Welsh perspective: Rent Smart Wales
  Bethan Jones, Rent Smart Wales

14:40 Supporting landlords to improve the sector - Landlord Advice
  Severina Kelley, Housing Rights

15:00 Q&A / Panel Discussion - Promoting Good Practice and Compliance
  Afternoon speakers with the addition of Stephen Leonard (Belfast City Council), Trevor Wright (CHNI), Jim Frazer (Trading Standards), John Crabbe (LANI).

15.40 Closing remarks

This one day conference will illustrate how the sector has and continues to change. We will identify steps we can take to ensure the change works for all. It will explore:

- alternative ways of resolving housing disputes to help both parties maintain a tenancy,
- examine how promoting good practice and compliance throughout tenancies is beneficial for both tenants and landlords,
- consider some of the models that have worked in other jurisdictions.

Who should attend?

- environmental health officers
- housing academics
- housing professionals
- landlords
- letting agents
- politicians and policy makers
- regeneration officers
- tenants

Book now

Members of Housing Rights - £125

Non members of Housing Rights - £150

Telephone: 028 90245640
Online: www.housingrights.org.uk
Email frances@housingrights.org.uk