

Section 3 Private Rented Housing.

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Section 3: Private Rented Housing.

3.1 The size and nature of the local private rented housing market

Within Angus there are opportunities to rent accommodation from private landlords. There are no exact details of the size and nature of the private rented housing market but, at 31st March, there were over 1199 households in the private rented sector receiving Rent Allowance (Housing Benefit). There is little in the way of seasonal activity in the private rented market although, the Elliot Caravan Site in Arbroath does provide winter lets whilst, the other major site in Arbroath does not. The Council does not have an “approved” landlord list; there are no quality checking, licensing or registration schemes in place. Two of the major sources of private sector housing are surplus farm cottages and estate workers houses.

3.2 Locations and costs of private rented housing

Privately rented sector accommodation is widely distributed throughout Angus. It tends to be centrally located in the larger Burghs, but mainly cottage type properties in the villages and the more rural locations. Sizes vary but in broad terms they tend to be smaller in towns (for example, bedsits or one bedroom flats), but larger (two or three bedroom properties) in the rural areas.

Costs vary, and at first glance compare very unfavourably with the average public sector rent levels. However, it must be appreciated that Angus Council rent levels are the second lowest in Scotland. Private sector rents average between 60% and 100% more than Local Authority rents. As a rough guide, rents are in the region of:

One bedroom flat	£45 per week
Two bedroom cottage	£75 per week
Three bedroom cottage	£150 per week

3.2.1 How to find out about private rented accommodation

- See the advertisements in the newspapers or insert a wanted advertisement: -

Dundee Courier & Advertiser	Daily, with a full property section on Thursdays. Covers the whole of Angus
Arbroath Herald	Weekly, published Fridays
Brechin Advertiser	Weekly, published Wednesdays
Forfar Dispatch	Weekly, published Wednesdays
Guide & Gazette	Weekly, published Fridays Covers Carnoustie and Monifieth

Kirriemuir Herald

Weekly, published Wednesdays

Montrose Review

Weekly, published Thursdays

- Contact the local solicitors and estate agents.
- Contact the Tayside Solicitors Property Centre in Dundee/read the Solicitors Property Guide published weekly
- Small ads on the supermarket notice boards or, in the windows of some shops and post offices
- Contact the local Area Housing Office. The Arbroath Area Housing Office will provide a list of Bed & Breakfasts and temporary accommodation, although it may not include all available property to let and inclusion on the list does not constitute any recommendation of the quality. In other offices, staff may be aware of properties to let, and will advise inquirers.
- Contact local farmers and Estates (names and addresses can be found in the Yellow Pages)
- Ask around, particularly in the country areas where some private renting opportunities may be “advertised” by word of mouth

NOTE that it is an offence –

- 1. For accommodation or letting agencies to levy a charge for putting your name on a list;**
- 2. For landlords in Scotland to levy any form of premium on the rent**

3.3 Housing Benefit Entitlement

People on low incomes with high rental costs are usually entitled to receive Housing Benefit to help them pay the rent.

It is important, however, to remember that there is no automatic entitlement - Housing Benefit will only be paid to someone who has gone through the application process properly and satisfies the statutory requirements for the payment of Housing Benefit. Moreover, the level of Housing Benefit awarded may not pay the rent in full.

It is very important, therefore, that anyone who may be relying on Housing Benefit to make a private rented opportunity affordable should contact the Housing Benefit advisers at the Council, Citizens’ Advice or other advice agency **before** they accept the tenancy. It is advisable to obtain a pre-tenancy determination (PTD) from the Housing Benefit office in advance of signing a tenancy agreement to ensure it is affordable. (*See Appendix A for further details on Housing Benefit*).

3.4 Houses in Multiple Occupation

In April 2000 the Scottish Executive approved a mandatory licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's). An HMO is:

Shared accommodation including flats, bedsits, lodgings, bed and breakfast accommodation and other communal accommodation such as student residences and hostels.

The accommodation must be the only or principal residence of a specified number of people who are not members either of the same family or of one or other of two families. From 1st October 2003 the specified number of people has been two.

The purpose of a mandatory licensing scheme is to ensure that the accommodation and safety, and the tenancy management meet acceptable standards.

If you own property that may be classified as an HMO, or if you live in an HMO and wish further information, please contact:

The Director of Law & Administration
Angus Council
St James House
St James Road
Forfar DD8 2ZE
Tel: 01307 461460

3.5 Private Landlords Accreditation Scheme

Angus Council are currently developing a register of private landlords in line with the Scottish Executive's proposals to introduce a national landlord registration scheme.

If you are a Private Landlord and would like further information on these proposals, please contact:

The Director of Housing
Angus Council
County Buildings
Market Street
Forfar
DD8 3WH

3.6 Legal Rights of Tenants

A guide to the legal rights of tenants and their families re Damp, Cold & Mouldy Housing is available from Legal Services Agency Ltd (LSA)

The Legal Services Agency Ltd.

3rd Floor

Fleming House

134 Renfrew Street

Glasgow

G3 6ST

Tel: - 0141 3533354

Fax: - 0141 3530354

Email: - lsa@btconnect.com

Website: - www.lsa.org.uk