

8th January 2008

ENERGY EFFICIENCY – TODAY’S HOT TOPIC FOR LANDLORDS

A day never passes without someone talking about green taxes, CO₂ emissions and saving the planet. Today’s hot topic for landlords is, therefore, energy efficiency, and the impact of the impending Energy Performance Certificates for rented accommodation as required by the European Directive adopted in 2001.

Is it worth investing in making improvements now, before this legislation is implemented next autumn?

“New regulations already apply to HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupancy) and we expect that by autumn 2008 all rental properties will need Energy Performance Certificates,” suggests Tina Nicholls, Operations Manager of ARLA-registered Ashton Burkinshaw, the southeast’s leading specialist letting and property management agent. “So, if landlords are refurbishing or doing major works, they should consult their local Building Regulations Officer with a view to making changes now.”

Key points to bear in mind are:

1. Cavity wall and loft insulation are very cost-effective measures to improve energy efficiency;
2. If replacing a boiler over 15 years old, you need a high efficiency condensing boiler, preferably linked to modern heating controls;
3. A combi boiler saves space as well as energy;
4. Replace appliances with ones displaying the Energy Saving Recommended logo.

“Although energy efficiency is unlikely to be a priority for all tenants, escalating utility bills have raised awareness of running costs and tenants do sometimes ask to see previous heating bills, for example.

“The right energy rating could tip the balance in today’s competitive market, where tenants have a wider choice. Nevertheless, it will be their own actions which will contribute to any energy savings, by not leaving lights and computers on!” Tina Nicholls continues.

