



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# Help and Advice

Northern Synod Office, 4 College Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JJ (0191-232 1168)

## Bulletin 62: PROPERTY RENTALS

The Help & Advice Group was set up by Synod in 2009, to support local churches in being informed and effective in their life and mission. The group was disbanded in 2014, as part of a simplification of Synod committees, and its work continues through the Trust Officer, under the oversight of the Trust's Property Subgroup. We are willing to try to provide specific advice on particular topics. Please get in touch if you have questions or suggestions.

This article is part of a series giving an overview of particular subjects of interest for local churches. We also circulate general updates from time to time. Bulletins will also be posted on the website <http://urc-northernsynod.org/help-advice-bulletins>, with direct links to other websites.

Where readers are directed to web-based resources, the Synod Office is willing to respond to reasonable requests for printed out information for readers without web access, although they may find it more satisfactory to follow up their interest through their local library's web access.

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### Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy has issued detailed guidance for landlords on these regulations:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-private-rented-property-minimum-standard-landlord-guidance-documents](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-private-rented-property-minimum-standard-landlord-guidance-documents)

It has been the case for ten years that before letting or selling property, an energy performance certificate must be obtained. Now, for new leases after 1 April 2018, rental property must achieve a minimum standard of at least band E energy efficiency rating. The scale runs from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient).

There are exemptions for places of worship (which are not required to have an EPC). Other exemptions apply where all possible improvements have already been made, where it cannot be achieved without cost to the landlord, where wall insulation would be inappropriate, where third party consent may be required, where works would devalue the property, or where the landlord is new. Exemptions must be officially registered. In the case of listed buildings, heritage conservation criteria take priority, so only works that can be justified on conservation grounds would be required.

The aim is to improve the energy efficiency of the nation's properties, and various funding schemes are provided, which generally have the effect of passing the cost on to the tenant over a number of years. It is likely that the property's trustee(s) would need to be involved in any funding agreement.

There is a phased introduction for properties that are already let, until 1 April 2020.

Where churches already have EPCs for their properties, they should consult them to see whether improvements would be required.

Under the same regulations, tenants already have the right to request improvements to residential properties:

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/508180/2016\\_01\\_19\\_PRS\\_tenants\\_energy\\_efficiency\\_improvements\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508180/2016_01_19_PRS_tenants_energy_efficiency_improvements_guidance.pdf)

## **Letting Property**

Before letting manses, halls or parts of churches, you should consult the Trust Officer in Synod Office. Church Meeting and Synod approval would be needed if they are United Reformed Church properties.

Further information is given in the Synod's Property Lettings Factsheet:

<http://urc-northernsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/fs3.pdf>

**Bulletin 53** outlines various other regulations affecting rented properties:

- 'Right to rent' checks
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- Legionnaires' disease
- Heat networks

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