

Cllr Sem Moema
Mayoral Advisor for Private Renting and Housing Affordability
London Borough of Hackney
Town Hall
Mare Street
London E8
Tel: 0208 356 3220

Email: sem.moema@hackney.gov.uk

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Dear Letting Agent,

Removing the burden of letting agent fees - join our voluntary scheme

This week Hackney Council launched the Better Renting campaign, setting out a series of measures that we think will improve the private rented sector in Hackney.

This campaign isn't just about helping tenants directly – we want to support professional landlords and letting agents who provide a great service to tenants in the borough, and take action against the rogue landlords and agents who aren't fair to their tenants.

As part of this, we're launching a new voluntary scheme, asking letting agents to opt in to remove letting agent fees straight away.

Why are we introducing the scheme?

Earlier this year, the government announced that letting agent fees will be banned in England. We support the proposal, but no timetable has been set for implementing the ban. We want to see change now, and we'll work with letting agents in Hackney to help make this happen.

Removing letting agent fees - such as charges for signing new tenancy agreements - can benefit both tenants and landlords, creating a fairer and more transparent private rented sector in the borough.

What's in it for me?

- **Everyone's a winner** - These fees are already banned in Scotland - since 2012 tenants have simply paid deposit and rent, with any other charges being for paid by the landlord. Research from Shelter shows that renters, landlords and the industry as a whole has benefited from the ban. More than three quarters of letting agents said that this change either had no impact or had benefitted them.



- **Get ahead of the competition** - With the ban already set to come forward across the UK in future, joining our scheme will help you get ahead of the competition and mean you're ready when new regulations come in.
- **A progressive Hackney** – Through this voluntary scheme we can demonstrate that businesses in Hackney are progressive, forward thinking and willing to work together to change things for the better.
- **Raise your profile** – once the scheme is up and running, we'll be looking at ways to promote and support participating letting agents, benefitting your business.

Stoke Newington letting agents Julian Reid Estate Agents already avoid fees, and say that it doesn't affect their business:

"We believe our fee is paid by the landlord – we don't need to charge fees to tenants for administration. We've always taken the view that letting in London is an expensive business and we know some letting agents charge huge fees which put a burden on the tenants.

"We want to be open and transparent about what a tenant will pay at the start of the tenancy and we don't think the fact that we don't charge fees puts us at a disadvantage against our competitors."

Julian Reid, Julian Reid Estate Agents

How do I get involved?

To register your interest in the scheme, or find out more how it will work, contact Eshe Deodat-Hill on Eshe.Deodat-Hill@Hackney.gov.uk or 020 8356 3617.

You can find out more about the Better Renting campaign at www.hackney.gov.uk/better-renting or support our campaign on Twitter using #BetterRenting.

We'll be following up in the coming months to see how you've responded to the voluntary scheme

Yours sincerely,



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