

# NextStep Landlords NEWSLETTER



July 2021

## NextStep during lockdown

The team have been working tirelessly throughout all of the lockdowns. Over the past year, we have worked with landlords and tenants to create 96 new tenancies!

The pandemic did mean that the way the team worked had to be adapted to facilitate more remote working however we continued to offer support to tenants, checking regularly on their welfare. We offered advice and guidance as and when their circumstances changed in particular for those tenants who were furloughed or at risk of losing their job. By keeping on top of changes, working efficiently and liaising with landlords regularly we were able to keep any disruption to a minimum.

We currently have a record number of households looking for accommodation and the demand is expected to continue. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting us and welcome any feedback in how we may be able to assist you further.

## Tenant's stories



Secure, affordable and quality Housing is crucial for families to thrive, and is all too often inaccessible for families, especially single parent households. Home provides an anchor for one's life and especially over the past year with all the extra time spent at home we have all come to realise how vitally important our homes are for our wellbeing. We are so pleased to be working with so many wonderful landlords who provide this housing for our NextStep tenants. This enables families to avoid sleeping on sofas at the homes of friends or family, in B&Bs or being placed in emergency accommodation which is often located outside of the area in London boroughs.

## Laura's story

Laura was working as a housekeeper and was living in the tied accommodation that came with her job. Shortly after finding out she was expecting her first baby, Laura's relationship with her partner suddenly sadly broke down. She was also asked to leave the tied accommodation by her employer as children were not allowed there and she would be going on maternity leave. On leaving her home, Laura was living between B&Bs and friend's houses. NextStep worked with Laura to secure her a long-term suitable property. Laura and her son are now living in a 2-bedroom flat in the local area. Her son is now in nursery

school, Laura is back in work and the family feel very settled.

Laura says, ***"If I think back to the moment I met Jenny from NextStep for the first time and where I am now, I can't believe how many things have changed! I had a 3 month old baby at that time, lived in temporary accommodation and was not entitled to any help. Now I am a happy mother, I work and try to raise my son as best as possible and having a house was the beginning of a rebirth for me."***

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## Electrical safety certificates

Landlords are now legally required to provide a satisfactory Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) for all new tenancies (The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020). An EICR must be given to a tenant before they occupy a property. EICRs have been a legal requirement since 1 April 2021. You must provide tenants with a copy of the new report within 28 days of the inspection.

The EICR outcome must be satisfactory and any remedial works must be carried out. Any items identified as C1 or C2 will mean that the report will have an unsatisfactory outcome and works will be required. On completion of remedial work, a Minor Electrical Installation Works Certificate will be issued as evidence of compliance instead of a

new EICR. Items identified as C3 will not result in an unsatisfactory outcome as they are not considered to be unsafe, although improvement is recommended. The report will detail when the next inspection is due. A copy of the most recent report must be given to the person carrying out the next inspection and test.

Additionally, for landlords who provide appliances with the tenancy such as a washing machine / fridge, PAT testing (Portable Appliance Testing) is also always best practice for landlords but this is not a legal requirement.

The full legislation can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/312/regulation/1/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/312/regulation/1/made)

Or you can speak to a member of the NextStep team.

## Free insulation for landlords and ECO3 grants

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme in Great Britain to tackle fuel poverty and help reduce carbon emissions.

Under the scheme, low-income households could be entitled to loft, solid wall and cavity wall insulation. Landlords would be eligible if the property has an EPC rating of D or below and have tenants who meet the criteria.

The UK Government has set targets for energy companies to meet as part of the drive to combat global climate change and reduce the UK's carbon footprint. Under the ECO, medium and larger energy suppliers are obliged to fund the installation of energy efficiency measures in British households. The latest phase will run until March 2022. The scheme is set to help more than one million households to overcome fuel poverty.

The amount of funding will depend on the household's income. Private tenants must be on a low income or in receipt of a combination of government benefits. The income and benefit requirements are calculated according to the size of the home and the composition of the household.

To qualify for insulation through the ECO scheme the property's energy supply must be registered with a participating energy supplier. The big six energy suppliers (British Gas, Eon, Npower, SSE, EDF, Scottish Power) are all participating. There are many other participating suppliers (it's often easiest to start with the one already supplying the property).

[www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-programmes/eco/contacts-guidance-and-resources/eco-supplier-contact-details](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-programmes/eco/contacts-guidance-and-resources/eco-supplier-contact-details)

Either the landlord or the tenant needs to contact the energy supplier in order to start the process, which begins with an energy assessment being carried out free of charge.



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## Meet the team



### **Jenny Hawes** – Housing Services Manager

Jenny has worked for the YMCA housing projects for 18 years, heading up the NextStep team for the last 11. She has achieved qualifications from the Chartered Institute of Housing, ARLA Property mark and Chartered Management Institute and frequently participates in courses to keep her knowledge up to date. She has established close working relationships with local authorities, statutory organisations and other local charities. When not working she enjoys spending time with her friends and family, walking and travel.



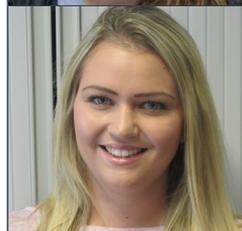
### **Sophie Fuller** – Housing Projects Worker (Landlord Procurement)

Sophie is our landlord officer and works to bring more landlords on board to NextStep. Sophie works along with the team to guide landlords through the process of renting out their properties and creating sustainable and successful tenancies. Sophie has a background in social housing and property maintenance. In her spare time, she enjoys dance training and hiking.



### **Carys Gallagher** – Housing Projects Worker

Carys has been working with NextStep since 2017, having previously worked for a local council. She has a CIH Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice. Always cheerful, helpful and friendly, Carys enjoys the reward of helping families into settled long term accommodation. In her spare time, Carys enjoys the challenge of long distance running and is currently training for the 2021 London Marathon.



### **Alice Lister** – Housing Projects Worker

Alice has been working for NextStep for nearly 4 years. She is responsible for the NextStep project within the Tandridge area. The referrals Alice receives are for non-priority individuals and couples who are either homeless or facing homelessness. Prior to working for NextStep, she worked as an estate agent in Epsom. In Alice's spare time, she enjoys family days out and shopping.



### **Iesha Perry** – Housing Projects Worker

Iesha has worked with NextStep for 18 months. She is a bubbly and enthusiastic person always bringing positive energy with her. Iesha has achieved a CIH Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice and has 12 years' experience of advice and guidance work. Iesha is well placed to work with applicants carrying out interviews assessing suitability, completing affordability checks and ensuring that the NextStep tenants are ready to rent.

## Get in touch

If you have any questions for us, please contact the NextStep team.

T 01737 378482 | E [NextStep@ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk](mailto:NextStep@ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk)

[www.ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk](http://www.ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk)

NextStep,  
Hillbrook House,  
68 Brighton Road, Redhill,  
Surrey, RH1 6QT