

## DASH Services - Promoting best practice in the private rented sector

DASH (Decent and Safe Homes) Services is a joint initiative between local authorities, property owners, landlords and tenants in the East Midlands. DASH aims to improve housing conditions, housing choice and housing management in the private sector, with particular emphasis on the private rented sector.

The service has operated successfully across the East Midlands region since 2005, providing a valuable low cost service to over 40 Local Authorities.

Over the last five years there has been a rapid growth of private renting due to a number of social and economic reasons. More private properties are being used by councils to house people and this has only exacerbated a shortage in properties. Landlord accreditation offers councils an opportunity to address problems in their local private rented sector, and save on the costs of enforcement and homelessness by working proactively with landlords and tenants.

DASH and its associated resources can have positive impacts on all of these challenges and many more besides.

About DASH:

Name:	<a href="#">DASH LANDLORD ACCREDITATION</a>
Location:	Geographically covers the 5 counties of the East Midlands: Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire & Leicestershire. Hosted by Derby City Council.
Finances:	Paid for by local authority subscriptions. Free to landlords at present with predicted costs being £99 for 1-19 properties (3 year membership)
Start Date:	2008 (previously known as EMLAS)
Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accredited landlords must keep to a voluntary Code of Standards relating to the management and physical condition of their property;</li><li>• Accreditation relies on self-certification by the landlord however a 10%+ property visit is required in order to gain accreditation</li><li>• Membership is for 3-years</li><li>• Continued Professional Development is vital - DASH promotes landlord development opportunities in the form of training, forums &amp; meetings</li><li>• A key function is to arm landlords with the knowledge required to competently, legally and professionally conduct their lettings</li></ul>
Success	Over 850 registered members representing over In one test area over 6 month period: 142 members 541 properties registered belonging to accredited landlords 106 landlords completed training Some common hazards identified during property visits over 5 month period:

	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>5 x fire hazards</i>  <i>4 x hazards relating to falls</i>  <i>2 x damp &amp; mould</i></p>
Key methods of Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular E-newsletters providing updates on policy and legislation and information about opportunities for landlords in a fresh engaging format</li> <li>• Access to training and networking at seminars/conferences</li> <li>• Access to dispute resolution support</li> <li>• Discounts on goods and services, and in some case LA fees.</li> <li>• Access to register on the student Housing List and council initiative</li> </ul>
Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 96% of the landlords were happy with the communication they received</li> <li>• 66% of landlords agreed that accredited landlords provide a better service to their tenants than a non-accredited landlords</li> <li>• 77% thinking that DASH landlords were more knowledgeable than non-accredited landlords in relation to their role and responsibilities</li> <li>• 95% thought that the scheme manual was clear and concise</li> <li>• 97% of landlords agreed that it is important to continue to develop as a landlord</li> <li>• 91% of landlords receiving the property improvement plan felt that we had been reasonable in allowing them time to reduce the health and safety risks in their property.</li> <li>• 91% felt that the scheme standards are set at the correct level.</li> <li>• 61% of landlords thought that they had either 'definitely' or 'probably' benefited from association with accreditation</li> <li>• 77% of members thought they would be more attractive to tenants than non-accredited landlords.</li> <li>• Receiving updates and information whether by the newsletter, the website or at an event was cited as the most popular advantage to being part of the scheme</li> </ul>
How we have taken this forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Produced more publications for download</li> <li>➤ Developed an Interactive online alternative for our landlord development training – which has received excellent feedback from users</li> <li>➤ Faster turn around to reach accreditation due to new improved web facilities</li> <li>➤ Provided more practical information on how to reduce hazards in properties.</li> <li>➤ Verified member's info so that we can focus our resources more efficiently</li> <li>➤ Increased presence &amp; quality of interaction at landlord forums/events – not just repeating the same old messages</li> <li>➤ Employed a marketing service to increase the awareness &amp; attractiveness of the scheme e.g. new website, scheme guides &amp; national media campaigns...</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Introduce a Tenant marketing scheme – making sure that tenants know of the quality assurance they get when using an accredited landlord.</li><li>➤ Become more visual on social media sites</li><li>➤ Pledge to keep in regular contact with our members giving a real sense of belonging.</li><li>➤ Working with ANUK on re-writing the accreditation handbook to help fellow local authorities develop good quality, efficient and effective accreditation schemes</li></ul>
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