

SEAL (South East Alliance of Landlords, Agents and Residents) is a partnership that includes a local voice of representatives, landlords, managing agents and residents and working together with Southend Council. As Selective Licensing has not gone away and is actively being implemented by an increasing number of Local Authorities, using the additional powers given to them through the Housing Act of 2004.

Seal has established a mutual beneficial relationship with Southend Borough Council to improve management of anti-social behaviour and property conditions in the private rented sector within the borough. It is important we all work together and show marked improvements, as the Council still retains the option to implement Selective Licensing.

It is in the interests of all professional/reputable Landlords and Agents to support SEAL (South East Alliance of Landlords, Agents and Residents) and stop the possible implementation of Selective Licensing and associated fees being charged, the £600 per property originally proposed probably being increased through time. These Agents, with a number of private Landlords are actively promoting their SEAL membership.

The benefits of being a SEAL member:-

- The Private Sector Housing Team have provided specific instructions to the Customer Service Centre(CSC) to double check that complaints being made have first been referred to their SEAL Landlord or to the SEAL Compliance Officer before progressing further – this helps minimise the number of tenant complaints which will reach the council resulting in wider inspections. Additionally, where a complaint reaches the PHS Team, it will carry out its duty, but will as a courtesy inform the Compliance officer that the complaint was not resolved enabling us to engage with members to expedite any remedial actions necessary.
- A **troublesome tenant list** has been set up to be shared between all Members to make them aware of any potential problem tenants. (The Data Protection office has agreed our procedure in writing).
- **SEAL preferred Landlords/Agents** - Southend Council are in partnership with SEAL and members are to be among the Councils preferred landlords and Agents, for referral of tenants.
- **SEAL Members** are far more likely to be able to resolve problems with tenants and neighbours, than non-members, and will benefit from SEAL Steering group assistance if necessary when a complaint escalates to the Council.
- **SEAL** aims to improve the management and standards of privately rented properties and reduce anti-social behaviour
- **When a Section 21 has been served by a Seal Member** and forwarded to the Council at an early stage, the Council will assist that tenant, and where eligible with the rent deposit scheme. The intention is to avoid lengthy and expensive court proceedings which are damaging to the tenant as well as to the landlord.
- The Council and SEAL are in talks to set up a '**Cheap Market/HMO Section**', to address the difficulties Members have in maintaining the legal standards when tenants destroy their efforts.
- SEAL Agents are finding the SEAL **identification stickers** to be **useful** in communications with Contractors trying to get into properties to carry out work.
- **SEAL** has developed a **platform** where the Council will listen to local rental property businesses who are willing to cooperate for the benefit of the whole community.

It is essential that you become a member of SEAL and this will enable us to work cohesively on your behalf and ensure that we are not subjected to this costly bureaucratic procedure of selective licensing. I am sure you can appreciate it is within every Landlord/Agent interest to be involved.

We also work closely to support Landlords with properties that are not up to the Seal standard with compliant Property Condition Visit Reports that meet HHSRS standards.

As a result of this partnership the proposal to introduce Selective Licencing has been postponed pending the success of SEAL.

For any further information please do not hesitate to contact myself on 07722600639 or by email info@southeastalliance.org.

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South East Alliance of Landlords, Agents and Residents.