

Rent Smart Wales Scrutiny Update February 2016

This update provides the latest information on Rent Smart Wales (RSW) and our progress since launch.

Launch of Rent Smart Wales

The launch featured in TV and national/local radio broadcasts as well as national and local press.

This is a summary of the print/online coverage prior to launch to the end of November 2015:

- 139 stories (12 print, 127 online)
- 104 positive (75%), 15 neutral (11%) and 20 negative (14%) stories
- 110 different sources (73 industry, 37 other*)
- 28 stories (20%) carried an image or used RSW branding
- 37% linked directly to the RSW website or social media pages
- Print coverage led to an estimated 503,218 impressions

* 'other' includes traditional print and online news outlets covering general news, as well as non-specific third party websites, including local government.

Funding Support for Local Authorities

Welsh Government has approved funding support of £13,636 for each local authority for activities to support the delivery of Rent Smart Wales. This will be used to promote RSW in the local areas and to undertake data cleansing exercises, to allow RSW to access relevant and up to date information about landlords in future.

Progress

Registrations and Licences

Ewch i rhentudoeth.llyw.cymru
neu ffoniwch **03000 133344**

Visit rentsmart.gov.wales
or call **03000 133344**



Since launch, 8677 people have created user accounts on our website (which allows them to book training and apply for an on-line registration) and of those people 5,602 have gone on to complete a landlord registration (i.e. complete the application and pay the fee). We have received around 500 paper licence application forms (the majority from landlords), and 130 licences have now been issued.

Training

On the 25th February, 1358 people had booked onto Rent Smart Wales run classroom based training courses; this is either our one day landlord course, or our one day agent course. 951 delegates had been fully trained, 47 courses have been delivered; 6 in North Wales, 12 in South West Wales and 18 in South East Wales. 98% of the delegates would recommend this course to others and 98% felt that the course would help them to become better landlords.

Some courses have been cancelled due to insufficient bookings. In particular, the Welsh Language courses have been a struggle to fill. We are asking local authorities to advertise the courses locally and advise landlords/agents that they need to plan ahead as it could take 8 weeks for an application to be approved following submission. Three Welsh Language courses have now been scheduled with a long lead time to allow bookings. We are tweeting about the courses and raising the profile of the harder to fill course locations.

In addition we now have 7 authorised External Training Providers to run 9 approved courses which are also suitable for landlords and agents to do for licence purposes. These are a combination of classroom and online courses. We are currently scrutinising 5 other submitted applications. The authorised companies and their approved courses, as well as the list of Rent Smart Wales courses, can all be found via the following weblink: <https://www.rentsmart.gov.wales/en/training/>

Rent Smart Wales Website

The website functionality now includes the following:

Ewch i [rhentudoeth.llyw.cymru](https://www.rentudoeth.llyw.cymru)
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- ✓ Completion and payment of Registration (we can also take over the phone payment, and also accept cheques and payment via invoice);
- ✓ Booking and payment for Rent Smart Wales training;
- ✓ On-line news, events, a downloads page and a tenant page with links to organisations that can assist tenants.

However, there is further development work needed before all the functionality required is in place. The priority development works are:

- ✓ On-line application and payment for licence;
- ✓ Transfer of Landlord Accreditation Wales members;
- ✓ On-line Rent Smart Wales training courses.

Local Authority Training

Local authority training is planned and will be arranged to coincide with the release of the local authority module on the RSW website. This is unlikely to take place until April/May. In the interim, local authorities are being kept informed through newsletters and all Wales meetings as required.

Communications

We commenced paid for communications at launch through to early December, recommencing in January. We are focusing paid-for communication in this first phase on:

Digital Activity - Google Display Network, Google PPC and Wales Online

Print Activity – inc Daily Post, South Wales Argus, South Wales Evening Post, South Wales Echo, Regional publications (Cynon Valley Leader, Glamorgan Gazette, Gwent Gazette, Pontypridd & Llantrisant Observer, Merthyr Express, Rhondda Leader, Rhymney Valley Express)

Direct Mail – to key target audiences inc landlords and agents (A5 booklet, 1/3 A4 booklet, A3 and A4 posters).

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The Rent Smart Wales website www.rentsmart.gov.wales / www.rhentudoeth.llyw.cymru and helpline 03000 133344 are our key communication channels and 'call to action'.

We are also sharing messages on Twitter - @rentsmartwales and @rhentudoethcym. Please help us share messages by following us and re-tweeting. Please also use our hashtags #rentsmartwales and #rhentudoeth.

We are building on the launch to raise awareness and engage with audiences, particularly key stakeholders and influencers across the private housing sector in Wales and wider.

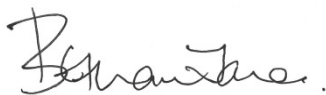
We are also contacting individuals/groups directly across Wales including - Insurance Brokers, Community centres, Libraries, Accountants, Supermarkets, Post Offices etc. These groups have been chosen specifically to ensure that there is no duplication of activity between national and local authority work.

Evaluation of Rent Smart Wales

Effective implementation of Rent Smart Wales is vital and with this in mind, Welsh Government has appointed an independent organisation (PACEC) to evaluate the implementation of the scheme over the next three years.

Local authorities are critical to the effective implementation of the Act.

Additional performance data is available on the Core Data documents produced monthly by the Communities & Customer Services Directorate.



Bethan Jones
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