

EMPO Newsletter



UPCOMING TRAINING COURSES

Fire Safety

Fri, 20th September, 9:30 - 15:30

Management and Licensing of HMO (1/2 day)

Wed, 25th September 09:00 - 12:30

Serving notice & gaining possession (1/2 day)

Wed, 25th September 13:00 - 16:00

Handling disputes & difficult situations in agency

Wed, 9th October, 09:30 - 15:30

Inventories, Deposits and Disputes

Wed, 16th October, 09:30 - 15:30

Wed, 01st November, 09:30 - 15:30

Intermediate Law for Lettings

Wed, 13th November, 09:30 - 15:30

Fire Safety - Advanced

Fri, 22nd November, 9:30 - 15:30

Book EMPO Events Now

Meet Hannah Cleaver - Your New Leicester Area Manager

We are thrilled to introduce Hannah Cleaver as our new Leicester Area Manager. With over 20 years of experience in the Lettings and Management Industry, Hannah brings a wealth of expertise in landlord-tenant relations and property management.

Hannah is committed to enhancing our support for members in Leicestershire. She will be organising insightful events such as the Landlord Forum, Everything Property updates, Possession Update sessions, and Wills & Inheritance workshops.

Feel free to contact Hannah directly at hannah@empo.co.uk or **07463541804**.

Please join us in welcoming Hannah to EMPO!

**SMITH
PARTNERSHIP**

SOLICITORS

We are thrilled to announce a series of exclusive, free evening seminars hosted by EMPO in collaboration with Smith Partnership. These seminars are crafted to keep

Event Highlights:

Property Law Insight Series: Derby & Leicester

Hosted by: Liam Kreibich and Claire Twells, Smith Partnership

Course Schedule:

1. Possession Update

Derby: 24th June 2024

Leicester: 18th September 2024

Gain a comprehensive understanding of serving Section 21 and Section 8 Notices, stay updated on the latest landlord and tenant law developments, and prepare for the upcoming changes following the abolition of Section 21 and the introduction of the Renters (Reform) Bill.

2. Wills and Inheritance Update

Derby: 25th September 2024

Leicester: 20th November 2024

Keep your estate planning robust and up-to-date with the latest insights on drafting wills, recent legal changes, and navigating inheritance laws.

Why Attend?

- Benefit from the knowledge of top legal professionals.
- Stay current with the latest property law developments.
- Network with fellow EMPO members and industry experts.
- Convenient evening format to fit your schedule.

Don't miss this chance to enhance your understanding and stay ahead in the field. Click the link below to register for the free seminars in Derby and Leicester.

[**Register Now!**](#)

Exclusive Member Benefit:

As an added advantage, EMPO members are eligible for 15 minutes of free legal advice from Smith Partnership. This is a perfect opportunity to get expert guidance on your property law concerns.

For even more training offerings tailored to all landlord and property owner needs, be sure to check out the EMPO Eventbrite page. Stay informed, connected, and ahead with our wide range of educational events and resources.

[**Visit EMPO Eventbrite**](#)

Swinging Success:



Thank you to everyone who joined us for our first Annual Golf Day on 4th June at the stunning Wollaton Park Golf Club. It was truly a day to remember, filled with camaraderie, friendly competition, and plenty of memorable moments.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Wilkin Chapman LLP and Belper Technology Ltd for their generous contributions to the event. Their support made it possible for us to offer exciting prizes for the Longest Drive and Closest to the Pin competitions. Congratulations to Phil Ashford from Comfort Estates for winning the Longest Drive, and to Daniel Otton from Buttercross Estates for clinching the Closest to the Pin title.

The event wouldn't have been the success it was without the enthusiastic participation of our members.

We look forward to hosting more engaging events like this in the future, where we can continue to strengthen connections within our EMPO community.

Save the Date: Our next Annual Golf Day will take place on 21st May 2025. Click [here](#) to stay updated and reserve your spot early!

Early Emergence of Japanese Knotweed in 2024 Prompts Management Concerns



In 2024, invasive plant species like Japanese knotweed are emerging much earlier than usual due to a warm and wet winter, causing concern among property owners and developers. Experts note a significant and early growth of Japanese knotweed this year, highlighting its ability to spread rapidly under favourable conditions.

This plant, introduced to Great Britain in 1825, is infamous for its aggressive root systems that can damage concrete, brickwork, and infrastructure, leading to substantial costs for homeowners and developers annually. Managing Japanese knotweed typically involves chemical treatments like Glyphosate herbicide, though application timing and method are critical to avoid unintended consequences. Early

Here are key strategies for managing Japanese knotweed:

1. *Early identification: Familiarise yourself with Japanese knotweed's growth stages to detect it early. Prompt recognition is crucial for minimizing its impact on your property.*
2. *Professional assessment: If you suspect Japanese knotweed on your property, seek confirmation from a qualified expert. A professional survey can determine the extent of the infestation and advise on appropriate actions and costs.*
3. *Legal responsibilities: Understand the legal obligations related to Japanese knotweed. In the UK, it is classified as controlled waste under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, with strict regulations governing its disposal.*
4. *Control methods: Evaluate control options based on your specific circumstances. Methods include chemical treatment, physical removal, and partial excavation. Consult with specialists to choose the most effective approach for managing the infestation.*
5. *Prevent spread: Take precautions to prevent unintentional spread of Japanese knotweed. Avoid disturbing soil or vegetation in affected areas and handle plant material carefully to prevent accidental propagation.*
6. *Community awareness: Educate others in your community about Japanese knotweed. Sharing knowledge about identification, management techniques, and legal requirements can help prevent its spread to neighbouring properties.*

Stay Ahead: Essential Training for Compliance with Council Licensing Requirements

In the realm of property management, keeping on top of licensing requirements is not just a necessity—it's mandatory. A recent reminder from Nottingham City Council underscores the importance of this obligation for landlords: those who hold licences must undertake training in line with their licensing conditions. Not doing so can lead to severe penalties and disruptions in managing your properties effectively.

Council Training Requirements:

The Council has stipulated that licence holders who have not attended relevant training in the past three years must complete approved training on the law and legal requirements relating to managing privately rented housing within 12 months of their licence being granted. Additionally, licence holders must be prepared to submit copies of their training records within twenty-eight days upon the Council's request.

How EMPO Supports Your Compliance:

EMPO is proud to be recognised as a provider of courses that support compliance with these licensing conditions. Our Foundation Law for Lettings course is specifically designed to meet the needs of landlords and letting agents, ensuring you stay compliant with the latest requirements.

interactions, and the specific regulations of privately rented housing. EMPO's training not only helps you meet council regulations but also equips you with the knowledge to manage your properties more effectively.

Why Choose EMPO?

Speed and Convenience: *Learn at your pace and complete your mandatory training in under an hour through our accessible online platform.*

Affordability: *At only £65, our course is designed to be budget-friendly while still providing invaluable content.*

Compliance Assurance: *Completing our course ensures that you meet the Nottingham City Council's licensing requirements, safeguarding you from potential fines and legal challenges.*

Enrol Today:

Don't wait for the Council's demand for compliance. Be proactive and ensure you are fully compliant by enrolling in our Foundation Law for Lettings course today. Visit EMPO's training portal to secure your spot and stay ahead in the evolving landscape of property management.

To sign up for just £65, click [here](#)

UK Housing Market Confidence Declines Amid Rising Rents and Falling Prices

Property Industry Eye

The UK housing market's confidence is declining despite recent improvements, as per the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The private rented sector faces a severe demand-supply imbalance, causing rents to rise and affordability to fall. Tenant demand surged while new landlord instructions stagnated, indicating continued rent hikes.

In the sales market, buyer demand has slightly dropped, particularly in southern England, though a modest rise in sales is expected. National house prices are falling, except in Scotland and Northern Ireland. RICS highlights the need for political focus on long-term housing policies and support for first-time buyers amid high interest rates, with hopes pinned on potential interest rate cuts for future market recovery.

[Read More](#)

Safety Following Shetfield Court Case

A recent court case in Sheffield has highlighted the serious consequences of neglecting fire safety in rental properties, urging landlords to take heed.

Zahir Ahmed, a landlord from Sheffield, received a suspended prison sentence of six months and 250 hours of community service. This sentencing followed Ahmed's admission to breaching fire safety laws after a fire incident in February 2022. Firefighters had to rescue 11 individuals trapped in his property, revealing deficiencies in fire alarms, emergency lighting, and appropriate fire doors. The incident also led to a firefighter sustaining injuries due to a collapsed staircase—the sole escape route.

This case underscores the critical importance of fire risk assessments, particularly for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Conducting these assessments is essential for landlords to fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure tenant safety. It enables landlords to identify and mitigate potential fire hazards, ensuring safe escape routes during emergencies.

There are three compelling reasons for landlords to prioritise fire safety. Firstly, under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, landlords in England and Wales are legally obliged to minimise fire risks and ensure safe escape routes. Secondly, ensuring tenant safety is paramount given the devastating impact of fires. Lastly, non-compliance can result in significant financial penalties and even imprisonment, as evidenced by the Sheffield case.

Landlords are encouraged to take proactive measures such as regular fire risk assessments, installation of necessary safety equipment, and educating tenants on fire safety protocols. By prioritising fire safety, landlords not only comply with the law but also create a safer living environment for their tenants, thereby reducing potential legal and financial risks.

This case serves as a crucial reminder for landlords across the UK to uphold rigorous fire safety standards in their rental properties to protect both lives and investments.

To book on to EMPO's "An Introduction to Fire Safety" course, click [HERE](#).

Combatting Fraud in the Lettings Process: A Guide for Agents

In recent years, the lettings industry has seen a rise in fraudulent tenancy applications due to evolving eviction regulations, economic instability, and easier access to document forging tools. Recognising and mitigating these risks is crucial for agents and landlords alike.

Identifying Fraudulent Activity:

Common fraudulent tactics include submitting fake IDs, altering income or residency documents, and providing false employer or landlord references. Vigilance in verifying

Utilising Technology for Prevention:

New technological advancements play a pivotal role in combating fraud. By leveraging tools like AI-driven identity verification services, agents can authenticate ID documents remotely and match tenants to their legitimate identities. This technology not only enhances security but also expedites the referencing process.

Financial Checks:

Credit referencing agencies provide valuable insights into an individual's financial history, offering an additional layer of security. Similarly, Open Banking facilitates secure data exchange to verify tenants' income directly from their bank accounts, minimising the risk of manipulated financial information.

Risk Mitigation Strategies:

Even with robust verification processes in place, there remains a residual risk of fraud. Agents are advised to consider rent protection insurance as a safety net against potential rent defaults, providing landlords with peace of mind during uncertain times.

Embracing Technological Advancements:

As technology continues to evolve, its role in both perpetrating and preventing referencing fraud becomes increasingly significant. With informed vigilance and proactive measures, agents can swiftly identify and mitigate fraudulent applications, safeguarding landlords' interests effectively.

Stay Informed and Proactive:

Staying ahead of fraudulent activities requires ongoing vigilance and adaptation to new technologies and methodologies. By maintaining a thorough understanding of potential risks and implementing robust fraud prevention strategies, agents can navigate the complexities of the lettings market with confidence.

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