

Summary of Gold and Platinum Standard Charter

The Council's focus is on enforcing against rogue landlords with steps also taken to educate the inexperienced and provide support to the professional. Whilst licensing helps to ensure landlords provide an acceptable service to tenants the creation of a Landlord's Gold Standard Charter is an opportunity to:

- recognise landlords who already provide a better service than the one required by law,
- encourage other landlords to achieve a higher standard, and
- give tenants a better idea of the standard of accommodation that they should be offered.

In order to be on the Gold Standard Charter, landlords/managing agents must agree to:

- Be a member of a recognised landlord's/managing agents association
- Be a member of an accreditation scheme
- Take responsibility for the safety of their tenants and their property/properties
- Give clear written tenancy agreements and information packs to their tenants
- Keep their tenants well informed of their rights and available services
- Provide security of tenure for their tenants
- Protect their tenants from illegal or unnecessary eviction
- Charge fair rents and avoid additional charges
- Provide a decent home for their tenants
- Maintain and repair their property/properties to a high standard

Licensing fees are split in to two parts. Part A is the administration fee paid at point of application for a licence. Part B is the fee that covers the cost of enforcement to the council and is payable when the full licence is issued. The Gold Standard Charter offers discounts on licensing fees. Landlords signed up to the Charter can receive a 50% discount on part B of the licensing fee.

A discount of 50% will be offered on the second part of the fee (enforcement element) for all licensing schemes where the landlord and/or managing agent has signed up to the council's Gold Standard Charter.

- a. A requirement of the Gold Standard Charter is that a landlord must be accredited with a recognised organisation. The discount for being an accredited landlord under the existing scheme has therefore been removed under the proposals for the new schemes.
- b. The Gold Standard Charter discount can be applied for a managing agent of a licensable property however, if the Licence Holder and/or landlord has not signed up to the Gold Standard Charter, landlords who change their managing agents during the period of the licence must ensure that any new agent is also signed up to the Gold Standard Charter or repay the discount, pro-rata, for the period of time the property is being managed by an agent not signed up to the Gold Standard Charter.

- c. Discounts will not apply to properties where the council has found it necessary to issue a warning letter requiring the landlord/agent to apply for a licence. This applies to previously unlicensed properties or properties where a previous licence has expired more than 3 months before the renewal application has been received.
- d. A Gold Standard Charter landlord/agent who has not applied for a licence on a licensable property without a warning letter from the council can have their Gold Charter status removed.
- e. If a licensing application is not successful, the fee for enforcement will not be charged. Any subsequent applications made for the same property will be charged the application fee (discount will apply where appropriate) and the further fee for enforcement if a licence is to be issued.

For additional licensing the discount is likely to be £195.
For selective licensing the discount is likely to be £135.

Platinum Standard Charter

There is also an option on the Gold Standard Charter for landlords to sign up to an additional commitment to become Platinum Standard Landlords. The additional criteria requires landlords to offer their properties to two of the three existing Council letting incentive schemes. The two schemes included in the Platinum Standard are; the social lettings agency, and the finder's fee scheme. Properties signed up to the social lettings agency will be licensed for free.

Only the part A fee will be charged where a property is registered for the finder's fee scheme. These discounts are only available for landlords signed up to the Gold Standard Charter and are in addition to any incentive payments made by the council. Both incentive schemes expect landlords to accept the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate as rent for the properties. No shortfall of rent can be required from the tenant and no Platinum Standard discount will be applied where landlords are found to be charging above the LHA rate.

For additional licensing the discount is likely to be £390.
For selective licensing the discount is likely to be £270.