



Press Release

Press release from **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service** and **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority**
Making Derbyshire Safer

20 January 2016

BUSINESSMAN CONVICTED FOR OFFENCES AGAINST REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005

Buy to let landlords, leaseholders and owners who provide sleeping accommodation for rent in houses of multiple occupation are being advised to seriously consider their legal obligations to keep their tenants and premises safe from fire.

On Monday 18 January 2016, businessman John Mark Cashin was convicted and fined £1000 for five offences in relation to premises he let and subsequently sub-let at Church drive, Shirebrook.

At his trial, which was heard at Buxton Magistrates' Court, Mr Cashin pleaded not guilty to four offences, and guilty to a fifth offence all against the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. As well as the £1000 fine imposed for the five offences, Mr Cashin was also ordered to pay £5000 costs plus a victim surcharge of £52, totalling £6052.

Mr Cashin distributed leaflets advertising for properties to rent, as a result of this leafleting Mr Cashin rented the Shirebrook property from its owner; he then went on to sub-let the property to four individual tenants without addressing the necessary fire safety improvements required by law for a house of multiple occupation.

Following receipt of a complaint relating to a lack of fire safety precautions and a genuine concern for tenant safety, fire inspectors visited the property on Church Drive, Shirebrook on the 18 June 2014.

email: enquiries@derbys-fire.gov.uk
www.derbys-fire.gov.uk

Terry McDermott MA
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive



The inspection resulted in a fire safety audit being carried out at the property. Several breaches of Fire Safety legislation were identified including:

- An apparent lack of a fire risk assessment, inadequate fire detection and alarm system - with several smoke alarms being found in a kitchen drawer.
- No provision for self-closing bedroom doors - the doors themselves being inadequate.
- A lack of window escapes from the 1st floor.
- No provision of portable firefighting equipment.
- The fire alarm system and emergency lighting had not been adequately tested or maintained.

An Enforcement Notice requiring Mr Cashin to address the breaches was served on him in July 2014, however failure to comply with this notice resulted in legal proceedings being instigated.

Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service Group Manager Phil Mitchell said: “When people rent a bedsit, or rooms in a property with other tenants, they should expect to be able to safely leave the property in an emergency situation. To enable this suitable fire alarm system must be present along with access to an emergency exit that can be accessed and safely used.

“Landlords should recognise that they have a legal - responsibility to ensure that any facilities they provide for their tenants have a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment in place and that it is reviewed regularly.”

Houses in multiple occupation within Derbyshire are assessed for fire safety compliance by Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service inspectors working in conjunction with local Authority housing Inspectors.

Mr Mitchell went on to say: “This case serves as a stark warning that the fire service will consider legal action against anyone found to be in breach of Fire Safety regulations and where they fail to comply with any statutory enforcement notices issued.

“Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service will advise and give support to both local and national businesses and are always willing to help make sure they comply with Fire Safety legislation. However, the public should continue to be reassured that legal action will be used when necessary, where any serious breaches of Fire Safety regulations are identified.’

For more information regarding business safety visit www.derbys-fire.gov.uk

Rachel Palmer
Press and Communications Manager