

# Row over private landlord's 'despicable' job advert

A PRIVATE landlord was criticised yesterday over a "despicable" job advert for his firm.

The advertisement was for a managerial post for Caduceus Investments Ltd in Hawick, Borders, and appeared on the company website.

Director Mark Kennedy-Stewart said he wanted someone with "the guts to kick someone between the legs as we evict them and their two-year-old child onto the street".

Mr Kennedy-Stewart, who runs the Falkirk-based firm with his wife, said the phrase was meant to be humorous.

But Scottish Borders Council, with whom he will have to register as a landlord, described the advert as "despicable".

A spokeswoman for the council said the wording casts serious doubt on the firm's ability to be a "fit and proper" landlord. She said: "The advert appears to portray an utter contempt for tenants and if this is a joke, it is a very sick one."

The job advert has since been taken down.

Writing on his company's website, Mr Kennedy-Stewart said: "The offensive line is in italics and quotation marks. I have a strong sense of humour and anyone working in our company has to cope with that, and with tenants who do not pay the rent at times.

"The number of times that I have been screamed at that I can't evict a mother with children is beyond count."

He added: "Anyone reading the entire paragraph will clearly see immediately before the line we have a requirement they learn and follow the rental law."

Under new antisocial behaviour legislation introduced in April by the Scottish Executive, all private landlords must register with individual councils and pass certain criteria to be allowed to rent out properties.

The council spokeswoman added: "Part of that process involves determining if a landlord is a fit and proper person and our partners in the police have a role to play in that."

A spokesman for Lothian and Borders Police said they were aware of the situation.