

# Landlord attacked by council for 'despicable' job advert

By A Scotland Correspondent

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

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

In the advert, company director Mark Kennedy-Stewart said that 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" to fill the post.

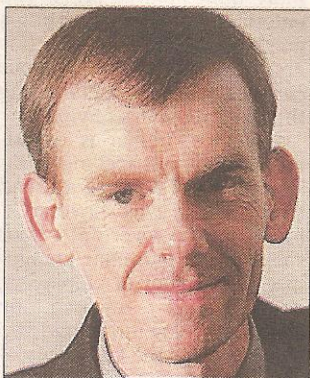
Mr Kennedy-Stewart, who runs the Falkirk-based firm with his wife, claimed that the wording was meant to be humorous. But Scottish Borders Council, with whom he will have to register as a private landlord, described the advert as "despicable".

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

The 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 child-



Mr Kennedy-Stewart: said the advert was meant to be funny

ren is beyond count. You have to have a strong personality"

Referring to the candidate criteria as it appeared on his website, he added: "Anyone reading the entire paragraph will clearly see that immediately before the line we have a requirement that 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 assessment."

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

The content of the advertisement was also condemned by housing and homeless charity Shelter Scotland.