

Press release: Crackdown on private landlords renting overcrowded and dangerous homes

Measures to improve overcrowded and dangerous living conditions of private tenants in shared homes were laid before Parliament today (15 March 2018) by Housing Minister Heather Wheeler.

Councils are being given tough new powers to tackle the small minority of rogue landlords who rent out overcrowded properties and impose fines of up to £30,000 for those landlords who do not comply.

From October councils will be able to set minimum bedroom size standards and also introduce limits on how many people can live in each bedroom of a licenced multiple occupancy home. Councils will be able to use national minimum standards or apply even tougher requirements in order to address specific local needs.

This move will help ensure tenants have the space they need and deserve as well as reduce health and safety risks they face by sharing cooking and washing facilities with too many people.

The new standards will apply to all landlords seeking new licences. Landlords of existing properties will be given up to 18 months to make necessary changes when re-applying for a licence when it expires.

In a move to stop rubbish piling up outside some shared rented homes, often presenting health risks and blighting neighbourhoods, landlords will also be required to provide adequate waste storage facilities in line with their local authority's rules. If they fail to do so they could face a fine.

These latest measures build on wider government action to drive up standards in the private rented sector by tackling bad landlords. This includes the launch of a new database of rogue landlords and introduction of banning orders for the worst offenders coming into force next month.

Minister Heather Wheeler said:

Everyone deserves a decent and safe place to live. But some tenants are being exploited by a minority of unscrupulous landlords who profit from renting out cramped and sometimes squalid or dangerous properties.

Today's measures will mean landlords must provide adequate space for their tenants or face a hefty fine. It is part of a raft of new powers for councils to crack down on rogue landlords and comprehensive action we are taking to improve conditions for private tenants.

Last month new legislation was introduced requiring more landlords to obtain a licence from their council. Landlords of 1 and 2-storey multiple occupancy properties will be brought within scope of mandatory licensing requirements across England, affecting roughly 160,000 additional properties.

Further information

Minimum space requirements

- Rooms used for sleeping by 1 person over 10 will have to be no smaller than 6.51 square metres, and those slept in by 2 people over 10 will have to be no smaller than 10.22 square metres. Rooms slept in by children of 10 years and younger will have to be no smaller than 4.64 square metres.
- The licence must specify the maximum number of persons (if any) who may occupy any room and the total number across the different rooms must be the same as the number of persons for whom the property is suitable to live in.

Extended scope of mandatory house in multiple occupation licensing

- National mandatory licensing currently only applies to houses in multiple occupation that have 3 or more storeys and occupied by 5 or more people. It is being extended to cover one/two storey houses in multiple occupation which are occupied by 5 or more people.

Waste Storage

- The government has re-affirmed the need for councils to provide comprehensive and frequent household waste collections which are free at the point of use. Councils should not seek to impose backdoor waste charging of residential properties, including houses in multiple occupation.

Banning orders and landlord database

A small number of rogue or criminal landlords knowingly rent out unsafe and substandard accommodation.

The [Housing and Planning Act 2016](#) introduced a range of measures to tackle rogue landlords:

- civil penalties of up to £30,000 as an alternative to prosecution – came into force April 2017
- extension of Rent Repayment Orders to cover illegal eviction, breach of a banning order or failure to comply with a statutory notice – came into force April 2017
- banning orders for the most serious offenders – to be implemented in April 2018
- a database of rogue landlords/letting property agents convicted of certain offences – to be implemented in April 2018

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