

[Press release: Government publishes key licensing changes to further protect tenants](#)

New guidance for landlords to further protect tenants from poor living conditions has been published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government today (20 June 2018).

Following legislation introduced last month, from 1 October 2018 any landlord who lets a property to 5 or more people – from 2 or more separate households – must be licensed by their local housing authority.

The move, affecting around 160,000 houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), will mean councils can take further action to crack down on the small minority of landlords renting out sub-standard and overcrowded homes.

New rules will also come into force setting minimum size requirements for bedrooms in HMOs to prevent overcrowding. Landlords will also be required to adhere to council refuse schemes, to reduce problems with rubbish.

The [guidance document](#) includes further details on extending mandatory licensing to smaller HMOs and introducing minimum bedroom sizes as government continues to rebalance the relationship between tenants and landlords.

Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP said:

Everyone deserves a decent and safe place to live.

Today's new guidance for landlords will further protect private renters against bad and overcrowded conditions and poor management practice.

Selective licensing

Government is also today announcing a review to look at how selective licensing is used and find out how well it is working.

In areas where selective licensing applies, landlords must apply for a licence if they want to rent out a property. This means the council can check whether they are a "fit or proper person" to be a landlord, as well as making other stipulations concerning management of the property and appropriate safety measures.

The review will see independent commissioners gather evidence from local authorities and bodies representing landlords, tenants and housing professionals.

The review's findings will be reported in spring 2019. There will be an update on progress in autumn this year.

Selective licensing allows local housing authorities to make it compulsory for all private rented accommodation in a specified area to have a licence.

The schemes are intended to deliver improved standards and safety in the private rented sector for areas suffering serious problems.