

Press release: Housing Minister confirms funding for councils to crack down on rogue landlords

- More than 50 councils to benefit from nearly £2.4 million to ramp up action against the minority of irresponsible landlords who make tenants' lives a misery
- Money to be used to boost short-term staffing and create new digital tools to help councils better protect tenants
- Measures build on action taken by government to protect renters and drive up standards across the sector

More than 50 councils across the country will share nearly £2.4 million of extra funding to crack down on rogue landlords, Housing Minister Heather Wheeler has announced today (14 January 2019).

Whilst the majority of landlords provide decent homes for their tenants, the cash boost will enable local councils to step up action against the small minority who continue to flout the law and force vulnerable tenants such as young families to live in inadequate or unsafe housing.

Councils across the country from Allerdale to Watford will receive a share of the funding for projects to take tougher action against unscrupulous landlords.

Among the councils to benefit from the funding are:

- Walsall – to improve cross-agency enforcement work, including the innovative use of drones and thermal mapping to identify problem properties
- Lancaster – to create a training programme for existing enforcement staff across the Lancashire region
- Greater London Authority (GLA) and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) – allocated over £330,000 between them to carry out coordinated work to tackle rogue landlords who operate across multiple local authorities in their regions

Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP said:

Everyone has the right to live in a home that is safe and secure, and it is vital we crack down on the small minority of landlords who are not giving their tenants this security.

This extra funding will further boost councils' ability to root out rogue landlords and ensure that poor-quality homes in the area are improved, making the housing market fairer for everyone.

The government has already equipped local authorities with strong powers to tackle criminal landlords, ranging from fines to outright bans for the worst offenders.

The new funding will be used to support a range of projects that councils have said will help them to ramp up action against criminal landlords – for example, to build relationships with external organisations such as the emergency services, legal services and local housing advocates.

Councils may also decide to support tenants to take action against poor standards through rent repayment orders, or develop digital solutions, helping officers to report back and make decisions quicker.

Councils that receive funding will be encouraged to share best practice and examples of innovative approaches, to help improve enforcement in other areas.

This builds on ongoing government action to drive up standards in the private rented sector – ensuring millions of hard-working tenants can live in the homes they deserve and creating a housing market that works for everyone.

There are 4.7 million households in the private rented sector in England, with recent statistics showing that 82% of private renters are satisfied with their accommodation.

The fund will help councils to take on the most common challenges that stand in the way of tackling poor standards in the private rented sector, including:

- the need for better information – on housing stock and on landlords and agents operating in their areas
- data sharing between authorities and agencies – identifying and bringing together different data sets to enable better enforcement targeting
- internal 'ways of working' – improving housing-specific legal expertise, in-house communication between teams, and tools and strategies to effectively implement policy
- innovative software – for enforcement officers to record their findings, gather evidence and streamline the enforcement process.