

# Press release: Rogue landlords put on notice as government announces tough new powers

Rogue landlords have been put on notice as government has announced today (28 December 2017) a raft of new measures to crack down on bad practices, stamp out overcrowding and improve standards for those renting in the private sector.

Housing Minister Alok Sharma has set out how, subject to parliamentary clearance, landlords renting properties in England occupied by 5 or more people, from 2 or more separate households will need to be licensed.

The move, affecting around 160,000 houses, will mean councils can take further action to crack down on unscrupulous landlords renting sub-standard and overcrowded homes.

Government has also set out details of criminal offences which will automatically ban someone from being a landlord. From April next year, someone convicted of offences such as burglary and stalking can be added to the database of rogue landlords and be barred from renting properties.

These latest measures build on government action to date to drive up safety and standards in the private rented sector. This includes bringing in fines of up to £30,000 for dodgy landlords, protections for tenants from revenge evictions and £12 million funding for councils to take enforcement action in hotspot areas.

Housing and Planning Minister Alok Sharma said:

Every tenant has a right to a safe, secure and decent home. But far too many are being exploited by unscrupulous landlords who profit from providing overcrowded, squalid and sometimes dangerous homes.

Enough is enough and so I'm putting these rogue landlords on notice – shape up or ship out of the rental business.

Through a raft of new powers we are giving councils the further tools they need to crack down these rogue landlords and kick them out of the business for good.

The move will also benefit wider communities fed up with living near shoddily maintained properties without proper bins, dumped rubbish and anti social behaviour. Landlords will be held responsible for making sure the council's rules on refuse and recycling are followed.

New rules will also come into force setting minimum size requirements for

bedrooms in houses of multiple occupation to prevent overcrowding. As part of the licencing requirements, local councils will be able to make sure only rooms meeting the standard are used for sleeping.

The new measures announced today were subject to consultation with the majority of responses supporting the new proposals:

### **Houses in multiple occupation**

There are around 4.3 million households in the private rented sector in England, with around 500,000 houses in multiple occupation.

The new licensing rules only apply to certain houses in multiple occupation in England.

National mandatory licensing currently only applies if properties are 3 or more storeys. This is being changed so flats and one/two-storey properties will be brought within scope.

### **Minimum space requirements**

Rooms used for sleeping by 1 adult will have to be no smaller than 6.51 square metres, and those slept in by 2 adults 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.

### **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 and prolific offenders – to be implemented in April 2018
- a database of rogue landlords/letting agents convicted of certain offences – to be implemented in April 2018