

Licensing for house in multiple occupation (HMO) three year review update.

A full three year review report was completed in December 2021 and this was submitted with the recent selective licensing executive board report and can be read here:

<https://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=177&MId=9491&Ver=4>

Key Outcomes Updated

On 24th August 2022 data was collected and a further review was carried out to update key outcomes. The activities have been undertaken and recorded since the start of the current additional licensing scheme on the 1st January 2019.

	Additional	Mandatory	Total
Licence applications received	1886	2843	4729
Licences granted in force	1663	2344	4007
Applications, withdrawn, returned, refused & cancelled	139	134	273
Licences with extra conditions added to improve amenities	47%	59%	
Licences revoked	8%	7%	
Licences varied to update information	17%	15%	
Fit and proper checks carried out for licence holders and managers	3123	3784	6907
Safety certificates checked gas, electric and fire, prior to granting a licence	3626	5403	9029
Issued for only 12 months and referred to Planning	74	42	116
HMO complaints to Safer Housing	341	947	1288
ASB Complaints to the HMO team directly	249	948	1197

Additional

- Over the last 12 months' period the team have granted on average 28 licences per month and 103 applications are currently pending a decision. The scheme has continued to receive on average 33* licence applications per month over the same period. *Sep 21 – Aug 22
- 238 unlicensed HMO investigations have been completed. 14% of these investigations have resulted in an application being made.
- 7% of applications have paid the less complaint fee and 36% had claimed the accredited fee.
- 519 internal property licensing inspections have been carried out and so far, and 51% of these have resulted in improvement works being necessary.
- 1797 external inspections have been carried out so far including revisits and this work has resulted in 1 in 4 properties requiring further improvement works.
- Complaints 341 HMO complaints have been received and 30% of these required an inspection visit and other were managed via video calls and triage to assess level of disrepair during COVID restrictions. Approximately 20% of licence additional properties have received a housing complaint.

- 355 ASB interventions have been recorded mainly around waste management and noise.

Mandatory Inspections

- Over the last 12 months' period the team have granted on average 40 licences per month over and 180 applications are pending a decision. The scheme has continued to receive on average 32* licence applications per month over the same period. *Sep 21 – Aug 22
- 7% of applications have paid the less complaint fee and 41% have claimed the accredited fee.
- 879 internal property licensing inspections have been carried out and so far, and 59% of these have resulted in improvement works being necessary.
- 216 unlicensed HMO investigations have been completed. 34% of these investigations have resulted in an application being made.
- Mandatory Complaints 947 HMO complaints have been received and 29% of these required an inspection visit and other were managed via video calls during the COVID restrictions and triage to assess disrepair. Approximately 40% of licence mandatory properties have received a housing complaint.
- 2869 external inspections have been carried out so far including revisits and this work has resulted in 1 in 4 properties requiring further improvement works.
- 979 ASB interventions have been recorded mainly around waste management and noise.

Enforcement

The enforcement work has been positive and continues to build with a greater focus on Compliance now in the final eighteen months of additional licencing approaches. As the compliance and enforcement activity continues to develop the scheme will continue to make an impact on the poorer properties to drive up standards as well as find unlicensed properties and less compliant landlords.

Part 1 Enforcement, CPNs & Prosecutions	Additional (No.)	Mandatory (No.)
Final CPNs	11	6
Proposed CPNs	17	26
Prosecutions	6	3
Improvement Notices	10	18
Prohibition Orders	20	6
Suspended Prohibition Orders	2	2
Hazard Awareness Notices	5	12

*January 2019 – August 2022

Conclusion

It must be noted that the Councils uses its full range of enforcement tools (ask, warn, enforce) and not all interventions will require enforcement as detailed above. Following inspection, the responsible person(s) will receive a housing report listing any deficiencies found and most of these are resolved with the Licence holders and managers quickly, once they become aware of the disrepair, hazard, and other breaches of legislation. Saving significant enforcement tools for the worst cases where every other intervention has failed.

This is why housing licensing is one of the most effective tools to drive behavioural change and the improvement of properties and property management within the PRS.

The review of the scheme has highlighted a number of successes with the continuation of the second additional HMO licensing scheme. Compliance rates are improving and there is much more engagement with landlords and agents.

However, it is disappointing to note that poor conditions and management practices still exist in this sector of the private rented stock. Without the proactive work associated with HMO licensing such issues would become more widespread and therefore the growth and continuation of HMO licensing will help to prevent a decline in standards within this vital sector of the housing market across the City.