



Improving the Private Rented Sector in Hammersmith & Fulham

Background

Hammersmith & Fulham Council wants to achieve better outcomes for our residents in the private rented sector. The private rented sector in Hammersmith & Fulham has grown rapidly in the last ten years and now accounts for approximately 27,500 properties in the Borough, a third of the Borough's housing. It is likely that this trend is to continue leading to the private rented sector becoming the dominant housing provider. A notable proportion of private rented sector accommodation is provided by Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

The increased demand and competition from tenants to find accommodation that is in short supply means that there is little market driven incentive for poor landlords to maintain minimum safe housing standards. It is reported that one in three private rented properties are 'non-decent' according to official measures. The Housing Act 2004 contains provisions for the introduction of a scheme of additional or selective licensing of private landlords in a local housing authority's area.

The Council believes that the introduction of a number of initiatives, including licensing schemes, would help the Council to work with landlords to ensure homes are safe and well managed through a set of minimum standard conditions.

Consultation on the impact of the options

Hammersmith & Fulham Council is required to consult with anyone who may be affected by the schemes and are inviting views from the wider public and neighbouring areas.

As a thank you for participating, you will be entered into a prize draw to win one of three prizes of Marks & Spencer's gift vouchers. The 1st prize is £100 in vouchers, 2nd prize of £50 in vouchers and a 3rd prize of £25 in vouchers.

We are consulting on five options (full details of the matters being considered are detailed in a consultation document which can be found here: [click here](#). The options being considered are:

Option 1: Introduce 'additional licensing'

Any "house in multiple occupation" (HMO) would need to apply to us for a licence. We can ensure it's properly managed and not overcrowded.

Option 2: Introduce 'selective licensing'

Properties in parts of the borough with high levels of anti-social behaviour will need to apply to us for a licence. They'll have to meet minimum tenancy and property standards. This will protect landlords, tenants and neighbouring residents.

Option 3: Introduce an H&F private landlords' rental charter

We want all landlords to sign up to the charter and commit to best practice in management, housing standards, charges, protecting tenants' deposits and security of tenancies. Tenants will be attracted to H&F charter landlords because they'll know they can have more confidence in them.

Option 4: Revise minimum standards for HMOs

To ensure that HMOs are safe and not overcrowded, we'll introduce new standards for management, safety, facilities and living space.

Option 5: Set up a social lettings agency

This new type of agency will help residents on low or modest incomes find a home in the private rented sector and will help landlords find suitable tenants. It will incentivise landlords to let to benefit claimants by offering residents support to sustain their tenancies.

Please give us your views.

If you have any queries, please email the council on phs@lbhf.gov.uk or Karen Etheridge, Research Manager at M·E·L Research on Freephone 0800 073 0348 or karen.etheridge@m-e-l.co.uk.

About you

Q1 Which of the following best describes you?

- 0 (0%) Business owner in a neighbouring borough
- 0 (0%) Resident in a neighbouring borough
- 1 (17%) Private landlord in a neighbouring borough
- 1 (17%) Letting/Managing agent in a neighbouring borough
- 4 (67%) Other (please specify below)
 - 3 (100%)

Q2 Which of the following best describes where you are based?

- 1 (17%) London Borough of Brent
- 0 (0%) London Borough of Ealing
- 2 (33%) London Borough of Hounslow
- 1 (17%) Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- 1 (17%) London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
- 1 (17%) London Borough of Wandsworth
- 0 (0%) Other
 - Other, please state below
 - 0 (0%)

Q2b Do you have a license in the borough you are based in?

- 0 (0%) Yes
- 1 (100%) No

Scheme proposals

Hammersmith & Fulham Council believe introducing a selective/additional licensing scheme would:

- a) Provide greater confidence in the private rented sector both for landlords and tenants and help dispel any poor image of the sector;
- b) Build partnership working with landlords and tenants to address anti-social behaviour (ASB) where behaviour links to the private rented sector;
- c) Improve management standards;
- d) Ensure a consistent and professional property management ethic among private landlords and take action against those landlords who persist in providing a poor standard of accommodation or whose tenants cause persistent levels of ASB;
- e) Create a level playing field to promote consistent standards and an understanding for tenants about what they can reasonably expect from their landlord so that informed choices can be made.
- f) Drive rogue landlords out of this sector, reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour in the borough, improve the local environment and improve storage and collection of waste, provide a strategic approach to managing this sector, provide a strategic approach to managing this sector

The Council is therefore considering the following options:

Scheme proposals: Option 1

Introduce 'additional licensing' on all HMO properties across Hammersmith & Fulham

This would require all private sector landlords to hold a license for each house in multiple occupation (HMOs), i.e. that is occupied by three or more non-related occupiers that share some basic facilities (such as a kitchen), and they would have to meet the necessary criteria in order to hold a licence.

This would provide safe homes for tenants to live in and allow the council to take action against landlords who provide a poor standard of accommodation.

Q3 What impact, if any, do you feel implementing an additional licensing scheme would have on you if it were introduced?

- 5 (71%) A positive impact
- 2 (29%) No impact
- 0 (0%) A negative impact
- 0 (0%) Don't know / not sure

Q4 Are there any other comments you would like to add?

2 (100%)

Scheme proposals: Option 2

Introduce 'selective licensing' on private rented properties in designated areas

This option would involve introducing a licencing scheme to designated areas in the borough which have been chosen based on evidence and consultation responses. All private sector landlords renting a property in the designated area would require a licence and have to meet the necessary criteria in order to hold a licence.

This would allow the Council to take action against landlords who provide a poor standard of accommodation or whose tenants cause persistent levels of anti-social behaviour

Q5 What impact, if any, do you feel implementing a selective licensing scheme on private rented properties in designated areas of the borough would have on you if it were introduced?

- 4 (57%) A positive impact
- 1 (14%) No impact
- 1 (14%) A negative impact
- 1 (14%) Don't know / not sure

Q6 Are there any other comments you would like to add?

2 (100%)

Scheme proposals: Option 3

Introduce a 'H&F private landlord's rental charter'

This option would be a voluntary scheme, which would see landlords encouraged to sign up to a rental charter, that commits them to following best practice on rents, housing standards, charges, tenants' deposit protection and security of tenure. The scheme would be free of charge, but by signing up to the charter, landlords could get £50 off a licence fee.

The proposal aims to be light touch and the Council will not verify that landlords are upholding the principles set out in the charter. However, landlords who have signed the charter but do not uphold to the principles will have their chartered status removed if an inspecting Council officer has cause to, subject to review.

Q7 What impact, if any, do you feel a Hammersmith & Fulham landlord's rental charter would have on you?

- 3 (43%) A positive impact
- 3 (43%) No impact
- 1 (14%) A negative impact
- 0 (0%) Don't know / not sure

Q8 Are there any other comments you would like to add?

2 (100%)

Scheme proposals: Option 4

Introduce revised HMO minimum standards

This would set out new local standards to ensure that accommodation is maintained above minimum national standards. This would provide information to landlords on what is required of them, including the management, safety, facilities and living space for the occupiers.

This would allow the Council to work with landlords to ensure homes are safe and well managed through a set of minimum standard conditions.

Q9 What impact, if any, do you feel implementing revised HMO minimum standards would have on you if it were introduced?

- 3 (43%) A positive impact
- 2 (29%) No impact
- 1 (14%) A negative impact
- 1 (14%) Don't know / not sure

Q10 Are there any other comments you would like to add?

2 (100%)

Scheme proposals: Option 5

Introduce a social letting agency

This option would be run by the Council, to better represent and advise its residents. In particular, it would look to assist residents on low or modest incomes to overcome the barrier to accessing homes in the private rented sector and help landlords in this part of the market find suitable tenants.

This would ensure that there are safe homes for tenants to live in and would provide tenants with consistent information regarding the standards of accommodation that the Council regards as acceptable.

Q11 What impact, if any, do you feel implementing a social letting agency would have on you?

- 4 (57%) A positive impact
- 2 (29%) No impact
- 0 (0%) A negative impact
- 1 (14%) Don't know / not sure

Q12 Are there any other comments you would like to add?

2 (100%)

Other suggestions and comments Scheme proposals: Option 6

Keep things as they are

The council could keep things as they are and not implement any of the above schemes, meaning the existing structures in place would remain.

Q13 What impact, if any, do you feel the proposal to keep things as they are would have on you?

- 0 (0%) A positive impact
- 3 (43%) No impact
- 2 (29%) A negative impact
- 2 (29%) Don't know / not sure

Q14 Are there any other comments you would like to add?

2 (100%)

Q15 Please provide any additional comments you wish to make about this consultation below. We are particularly keen to hear any other ideas you may have to address any issues experienced with private rented properties in Hammersmith & Fulham.

3 (100%)

About you

This last section asks you some questions about yourself so we can fully understand different people's views and experiences.

Q16 How old are you?

0 (0%) 18-24

1 (14%) 25-34

0 (0%) 35-44

4 (57%) 45-54

0 (0%) 55-64

1 (14%) 65 and over

1 (14%) Prefer not to say

Q17 What is your current working status?

5 (71%) Employed (full or part time)

1 (14%) Self-employed

0 (0%) Out of work

0 (0%) Looking after the home or family

0 (0%) Unable to work/long term sick

0 (0%) Retired

0 (0%) Full time student

1 (14%) Other

Q18 Are you....

4 (57%) Male

3 (43%) Female

Q19 Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

6 (86%) Yes

0 (0%) No

1 (14%) Prefer not to say

Q20 As a woman, are you.....?

- 1 (33%) Pregnant
- 0 (0%) On maternity leave
- 0 (0%) Returning from maternity leave
- 0 (0%) Prefer not to say
- 2 (67%) Not applicable

Q21 What is your marital status?

- 4 (67%) Married/Civil Partnership
- 0 (0%) Divorced
- 2 (33%) Single
- 0 (0%) Widowed
- 0 (0%) Other

Q22 Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- 1 (17%) Bisexual
- 0 (0%) Gay/Lesbian
- 5 (83%) Heterosexual/Straight

Q23 What is your ethnic background?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 4 (67%) White: English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British | 0 (0%) Asian: Pakistani |
| 1 (17%) White: Irish | 0 (0%) Asian: Bangladeshi |
| 0 (0%) White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 0 (0%) Asian: Chinese |
| 0 (0%) White: Other | 0 (0%) Asian: Other |
| 0 (0%) Mixed: White and Black Caribbean | 0 (0%) Black: African |
| 0 (0%) Mixed: White and Black African | 1 (17%) Black: Caribbean |
| 0 (0%) Mixed: White and Asian | 0 (0%) Black: Other |
| 0 (0%) Mixed: Other | 0 (0%) Other: Arab |
| 0 (0%) Asian: Indian | 0 (0%) Other: Other ethnic background |
| | 0 (0%) Prefer not to say |

Q24 What is your religion or belief?

- 0 (0%) Buddhist
- 5 (83%) Christian
- 0 (0%) Hindu
- 0 (0%) Jewish
- 1 (17%) Muslim
- 0 (0%) Sikh
- 0 (0%) Other
- 0 (0%) No religion

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as a person who has a disability. A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on (his or her) ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Q Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

25 (0%) Yes

6 (100%) No

Q If yes, is your disability related to any of the following: (Please tick all that apply)

26 (0%) Learning Disability (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)

0 (0%) Long term illness/health condition (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, Multiple Sclerosis)

0 (0%) Sensory Impairment (e.g. Blind, Deaf, Glaucoma, hearing impairment, visual impairment)

0 (0%) Mental Health Condition (e.g. anorexia, depression, schizophrenia)

0 (0%) Physical Impairment (e.g. amputation, wheelchair user, manual dexterity issues)

0 (0%) Cognitive Impairment (e.g. Autism, Aspergers Syndrome, head injury)

0 (0%) Other (Please specify if you wish)

0 (0%)

Thank you

If you would like Hammersmith & Fulham Council to keep you informed about this consultation, please provide your contact details below. All personal information you provide will be held in accordance with provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and only used for administration of this consultation. It will not be disclosed to any third party.

Name: 6 (100%)

Address: 6 (100%)

Postcode: 6 (100%)

Phone number(s): 4 (100%)

Email address: 6 (100%)

Check If you would like to be included in the free prize draw, please tick below.

4 (100%) Yes, please include me in the prize draw.

If you have any queries, please email the council on phs@lbhf.gov.uk or Karen Etheridge, Research Manager at M·E·L Research on Freephone 0800 073 0348 or karen.etheridge@melresearch.co.uk.

PLEASE CLICK THE 'SUBMIT' BUTTON BELOW