



Landlord licences to stamp out 'dangerous' HMOs

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A council in north London has said it needs to bring back tougher rules to deal with “rogue landlords” of houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs).

Brent Council says there is currently a “significant number” of such homes in the borough that are “substandard and potentially dangerous” and which pose a risk to residents.

The council plans to restart a licensing scheme which saw 2,500 HMOs licensed and helped the council “improve standards and management practices”.

It is now consulting on the plans and hopes to bring them in this autumn.

Brent council says HMO licensing makes sure that houses are ‘safe, well-managed, and provide basic facilities for tenants’, and says it gives powers to officers to inspect licensed properties to ensure they meet the required standards.

The consultation states: “It is important that the council uses all available tools to improve conditions for tenants in this sector. Licensing is one of the tools and plays a key role in this effort.”

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJsGZL-zb54>

A mandatory licence is already needed for HMOs with five or more people from two or more households.

The additional rules would cover typically smaller HMOs with three or more people from two or more different households.

Licensing imposes specific obligations on the landlord to demonstrate that their property is safe while enabling the council to enforce rules.

The licence would cost landlords around £1,040 for the application, processing and inspection of up to five habitable rooms – and a further £25 per additional room.

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Opinions wanted

Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, said: “Over the past 20 years, the number of privately rented homes in Brent has grown, and now makes up almost half of all homes in the borough.

“We want to make sure these homes are safe and good quality for tenants.”

She added: “While we have seen significant improvements, we believe that another additional HMO licensing scheme is necessary to maintain and improve the management of HMOs in Brent.

“We want to encourage residents to give their opinions on these new proposals for HMOs.”

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