

Landlord newsletter

A newsletter for HMO landlords, managing agents and letting agents in Camden



Issue 7 – Winter/Spring 2022

As we move towards Spring, we hope that this finds you, your families and colleagues well.

Following on from our last newsletter, this edition will seek to update you on what is happening nationally as well as locally in Camden. It also focusses on how HMO landlords and property managers can ensure compliance with licence conditions.



National updates

Progress on the Renters' Reform Bill

The Government announced early last year, ahead of a future Renters' Reform Bill, that they would publish a policy white paper last autumn. The white paper was to cover possession reform, mandatory redress for landlords, a possible landlord register, lifetime deposits and improved enforcement. In short, big changes to the private rented sector.

As you may know, changes to the cabinet last autumn led to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) being replaced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

DLUHC have announced that the white paper has been delayed, citing they want to consider the findings of the National Audit

National Audit Office report into regulating the private rented sector

A pivotal [report](#) by the National Audit Office (NAO) published in December last year, found that the way private renting is regulated is not effective in ensuring the sector is fair for renters or that housing is safe and secure. The NAO found DLUHC does not yet have a strategy for what it wants regulation of the private rented sector to look like.

This report is likely to influence the policy white paper mentioned opposite.

National landlord register

Office's review of regulation of the sector which was published in December 2021 (see opposite box). No new date for the white paper has been set.

The government has said that a National Landlord Register is likely to be included in the Renters' Reform Bill.

Last year they opened a consultation for renters on a National Landlord Register. The results of this have not yet been published.

End of eviction ban and guidance on possession process

On 1 October 2021, the Government lifted the emergency measures that were put in place to support private renters during the pandemic. Notice periods have now gone back to pre-pandemic levels.

The Government have also published [guidance for landlords and tenants](#) in the private rented sector to explain possession process in the county courts.

As well as helping landlords understand how the possession action process works and the new arrangements which will be in place when the possession ends, it also aims to assist tenants who have been served with a notice requiring or seeking possession.

It also contains advice to help tenants and private landlords to resolve common disputes in tenancies, such as rent arrears and anti-social behaviour, without the matter needing to go to court.

Net Zero strategy

In October 2021, the Government published its [Net Zero strategy](#) which aims to make homes more energy efficient. They have stated the response to the consultation on strengthening Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in privately rented homes to EPC band C by 2028 will be published soon.

See below for how Camden can help landlords in the borough.

Carbon monoxide alarms

The Government has announced regulations will be changed so that [carbon monoxide alarms](#) must be fitted in social and privately rented properties with fixed appliances such as gas boilers or fires. Disappointingly these omit requiring a CO alarm where there is a gas cooker/hob.

Camden's HMO standards require require a BS EN 50291 kite-marked carbon monoxide alarm (mains or battery powered) to be fitted in any room where [any fuel burning appliance is fitted](#), including those that burn gas, oil, coal and wood. This also includes any room that has a flue running through it. If there is an enclosed boiler, it should be fitted just outside the enclosure. Alarms should be fitted in accordance with the British Standards.



Local updates & information

HMO licence renewal - reminder

Please be aware that you can only make an online application for a **licence renewal** if you are the current licence holder and the licence has not expired.

If the licence holder has changed a new HMO licence application will be needed.

If the applicant has changed since the original licence application then the new applicant will have to create a new HMO portal account and make a completely new application. However, in this case, the applicant is still entitled to the reduced fee for renewals and so only pays the 'part 1' fee.

We aim to send out renewal reminder two months before expiry. However this is not a legal requirement and ultimately it is the landlord's responsibility to renew a licence before it expires. Please check your current licence to see when it needs renewing as failure to renew will mean your HMO will be unlicensed (which is a criminal offence and subject to large fines).

Access to the HMO portal for renewals will open 30 days before the expiry date of the existing licence.

Please also carefully review your current licence to ensure that all the conditions have been met. Non-compliance could result in enforcement action being taken or a one-year licence being issued.

For further guidance on making a new or renewal application please visit: camden.gov.uk/hmolicensing

Green Homes Grant

Would you like to ensure that your property is in compliance with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), improve the warmth and comfort of your property, and help your tenants save on their energy bills? The Green Homes Grant is here to assist.

Landlords with properties in Camden can receive up to £5k of grant funding to cover two thirds of the costs for the installation of efficiency measures, such as low carbon heating systems, insulation, and smart heating controls.

HMO licence - changes that need notifying to the Council

A reminder that the licence holder or manager should inform the HMO licensing team of any changes to licence holder, manager or anyone else involved with the property or its management. This should be done within seven days of such a change occurring.

Also any proposed changes to the construction, layout, or the kitchens or bathrooms in the property should be approved by the HMO licensing team before being carried out. This is because they might affect the licence or the licence conditions. Examples would be the moving of a partition wall, change of use of a room such as a lounge into a bedroom, and installation of an ensuite bathroom.

Notifications should be sent to hmolicensing@camden.gov.uk

New tenant engagement website launched in Camden

The private sector housing team have worked with tenants, other council services and our external partners to develop a new dedicated website for tenants, [Camden Private Renters](#). The website provides essential information and guidance, to help private tenants before they move into a new home, during their tenancy and at the end of their tenancy. The site also refers visitors to a range of external supporting partners who have cooperated on its development, such as Camden Federation of Private Tenants, Shelter, Citizens Advice, Age UK, Safer Renting, University of London Housing Services.

Electrical safety standards

From April last year, all landlords must have the [electrical installations in their properties inspected and tested](#), at least every five years, by a qualified person. The landlord must get an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) from the person carrying out the inspection.

To be eligible your property must have an energy rating of D, E, F or G (the lowest ratings) and your tenants must have an annual income of no more than £30k per annum or up to £20,000 income after housing costs.

Click [here](#) for more information or check your eligibility and register your interest [here](#). You can also call our project partners, Warmworks free on **0808 196 8255**.

The EICR must be given to prospective tenant(s) before they move in and to any current tenants within 28 days of the test.

Remedial work, or further investigative work must be completed within 28 days, and written confirmation should be given to both the tenants and the Council within 28 days of completion of the works.

Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) are important documents that will inform you about the electrical safety of your property. However, engaging a contractor and obtaining a certificate stating the electrical installation to be 'satisfactory' may not in itself be enough to ensure you have complied with your duties. It is important that landlords exercise 'due diligence' when choosing a contractor, and take time to read and consider the information on a certificate.

You should look for an electrician registered with a nationally recognised third party body such as N.I.C.E.I.C, E.C.A, or NAPIT and check the electrician you are using is authorised to issue EICRs.

Rogue landlord news

Banning orders

Camden Council has successfully secured [banning orders against four rogue landlords](#) after they were found to be letting an unlicensed and unsafe home in Kilburn.

A banning order prevents a named individual from letting property, engaging in letting agency work, and engaging in property management work in England for five years.

The number of Landlord banning orders secured by Camden now stands at seven – the most secured by any local authority in England.

The Private Sector Housing Service recognises that the majority of landlords provide good quality housing, however will make use of all available regulatory tools to tackle rogue landlords to ensure safe housing for Camden private renters.

If you own, rent or manage an HMO you need to make sure you have an HMO licence and comply with the conditions. Our [webpages](#) contain useful information and if you still have any questions, contact the HMO licensing team (details below).

✉ Contact the team

If you would like any further information concerning your HMO licence, or to report an unlicensed HMO, please contact the HMO licensing team: hmolicensing@camden.gov.uk or phone the team on: 020 7974 5969.

