

# Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - How do we get a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton?

Thursday, 18th January, 2024  
at 5.30 pm

## **PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING**

Conference Rooms 3 and 4 - Civic Centre

This meeting is open to the public

### **Members**

Councillor McEwing  
Councillor Evey  
Councillor Powell-Vaughan  
Councillor Windle  
Councillor Blackman

### **Contacts**

Democratic Support Officer  
Melanie Morley  
Email: [Melanie.Morley@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:Melanie.Morley@southampton.gov.uk)

### **Scrutiny Manager**

Mark Pirnie  
Tel: 023 8083 3886  
Email: [mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk)

# PUBLIC INFORMATION

## **Role of Scrutiny Panel Inquiry –**

### **Purpose:**

To identify opportunities to improve outcomes for private sector renters in Southampton.

**Use of Social Media:-** The Council supports the video or audio recording of meetings open to the public, for either live or subsequent broadcast. However, if, in the Chair's opinion, a person filming or recording a meeting or taking photographs is interrupting proceedings or causing a disturbance, under the Council's Standing Orders the person can be ordered to stop their activity, or to leave the meeting.

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Details of the Council's Guidance on the recording of meetings is available on the Council's website.

## **Southampton: Corporate Plan 2022-2030**

sets out the four key goals:

- **Strong Foundations for Life.-** For people to access and maximise opportunities to truly thrive, Southampton will focus on ensuring residents of all ages and backgrounds have strong foundations for life.
- **A proud and resilient city -** Southampton's greatest assets are our people. Enriched lives lead to thriving communities, which in turn create places where people want to live, work and study.
- **A prosperous city -** Southampton will focus on growing our local economy and bringing investment into our city.
- **A successful, sustainable organisation -** The successful delivery of the outcomes in this plan will be rooted in the culture of our organisation and becoming an effective and efficient council.

## **Public Representations**

At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may address the meeting about any report on the agenda for the meeting in which they have a relevant interest.

**Smoking policy –** the Council operates a no-smoking policy in all civic buildings.

**MOBILE TELEPHONES:-** Please switch your mobile telephones or other IT to silent whilst in the meeting.

**Fire Procedure –** in the event of a fire or other emergency a continuous alarm will sound and you will be advised by Council officers what action to take.

**Access –** access is available for the disabled. Please contact the Democratic Support Officer who will help to make any necessary arrangements.

## **Dates of Meetings: 2023/2024**

16 November 2023
21 December 2023
18 January 2024
15 February 2024
29 February 2024
18 April 2024

## CONDUCT OF MEETING

### **Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference of the Committee are contained in the Council's Constitution.

### **Business to be discussed**

Only those items listed on the attached agenda may be considered at this meeting.

### **Rules of Procedure**

The meeting is governed by the Council Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

### **Quorum**

The minimum number of appointed Members required to be in attendance to hold the meeting is 3.

### **Disclosure of Interests**

Members are required to disclose, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, **both** the existence **and** nature of any "personal" or "prejudicial" interests they may have in relation to matters for consideration on this Agenda.

### **Personal Interests**

A Member must regard himself or herself as having a personal interest in any matter

- (i) if the matter relates to an interest in the Member's register of interests; or
- (ii) if a decision upon a matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting to a greater extent than other Council Tax payers, ratepayers and inhabitants of the District, the wellbeing or financial position of himself or herself, a relative or a friend or:-
  - (a) any employment or business carried on by such person;
  - (b) any person who employs or has appointed such a person, any firm in which such a person is a partner, or any company of which such a person is a director;
  - (c) any corporate body in which such a person has a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000; or
  - (d) any body listed in Article 14(a) to (e) in which such a person holds a position of general control or management.

A Member must disclose a personal interest.

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## **Prejudicial Interests**

Having identified a personal interest, a Member must consider whether a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably think that the interest was so significant and particular that it could prejudice that Member's judgement of the public interest. If that is the case, the interest must be regarded as "prejudicial" and the Member must disclose the interest and withdraw from the meeting room during discussion on the item.

It should be noted that a prejudicial interest may apply to part or the whole of an item.

Where there are a series of inter-related financial or resource matters, with a limited resource available, under consideration a prejudicial interest in one matter relating to that resource may lead to a member being excluded from considering the other matters relating to that same limited resource.

There are some limited exceptions.

Note: Members are encouraged to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or his staff in Democratic Services if they have any problems or concerns in relation to the above.

## **Principles of Decision Making**

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:-

- proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
- respect for human rights;
- a presumption in favour of openness, accountability and transparency;
- setting out what options have been considered;
- setting out reasons for the decision; and
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes.

In exercising discretion, the decision maker must:

- understand the law that regulates the decision making power and gives effect to it. The decision-maker must direct itself properly in law;
- take into account all relevant matters (those matters which the law requires the authority as a matter of legal obligation to take into account);
- leave out of account irrelevant considerations;
- act for a proper purpose, exercising its powers for the public good;
- not reach a decision which no authority acting reasonably could reach, (also known as the "rationality" or "taking leave of your senses" principle);
- comply with the rule that local government finance is to be conducted on an annual basis. Save to the extent authorised by Parliament, 'live now, pay later' and forward funding are unlawful; and
- act with procedural propriety in accordance with the rules of fairness.

## AGENDA

Agendas and papers are now available online at  
[www.southampton.gov.uk/council/meeting-papers](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/council/meeting-papers)

### **1 APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

To note any changes in membership of the Panel made in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

### **2 DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, and the Council's Code of Conduct, Members to disclose any personal or pecuniary interests in any matter included on the agenda for this meeting.

NOTE: Members are reminded that, where applicable, they must complete the appropriate form recording details of any such interests and hand it to the Democratic Support Officer.

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF SCRUTINY INTEREST**

Members are invited to declare any prior participation in any decision taken by a Committee, Sub-Committee, or Panel of the Council on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

### **4 DECLARATION OF PARTY POLITICAL WHIP**

Members are invited to declare the application of any party political whip on any matter on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

### **5 STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

### **6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING) (Pages 1 - 6)**

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2023 and to deal with any matters arising, attached.

### **7 THE CONDITION OF PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING (Pages 7 - 20)**

Report of the Scrutiny Manager recommending that the Panel consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review.

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**SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - HOW DO WE GET A BETTER DEAL FOR PRIVATE  
SECTOR RENTERS IN SOUTHAMPTON?**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 DECEMBER 2023**

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Present: Councillors McEwing, Every, Windle and Blackman

Apologies: Councillor Powell-Vaughan

5. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

Apologies were received from Councillor Powell-Vaughan.

6. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

7. **THE AFFORDABILITY OF PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING**

The Panel considered the report of the Scrutiny Manager concerning the affordability of private sector rented housing in Southampton.

The Panel received the following representations:

Councillor Tom Renhard, Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homelessness, Bristol City Council and Alfie Thomas, Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs Officer, Bristol City Council summarised the findings from Bristol City Council's Living Rent Commission. Key points raised in the presentation included the following:

- In Bristol between 2011-2021 the cost of renting privately grew by 52% while wages grew by 24%.
- Median advertised rent increased by 25% from 2018 to 2020. When a property was re-listed in Bristol its rent increased by roughly 6%. Even after adjusting for flat size, rents for cheaper properties in 2018 grew between two and four times as fast as rents for more expensive properties.
- The average house price in Bristol was almost ten times local average earnings. House prices forced people to stay in an already cramped private rented market for longer.
- The supply of properties listed to rent declined by nearly two thirds from 2018 to 2020.
- The Council's Corporate Strategy set out the aim of pursuing a "living rent" in Bristol and committed to ensuring fair access to a decent home.
- The Council was committed to increasing housing supply which was one of the major challenges and 2,563 new homes were built in 2021/2022. Project1000 focused on building affordable homes and aimed to deliver 1000 affordable homes a year by 2024.
- The Bristol Living Rent Commission concluded that private renting in Bristol faced a serious crisis of access, affordability and security of tenure, which impacted the wellbeing and quality of life for people in Bristol and played a major role in creating homelessness.

- The final report outlined twenty-nine recommendations of which twenty three were for Bristol City Council.
- The Living Rent Commission concluded that it could be possible to develop a rent control system that had a broad base of support if power was devolved to pursue further research into a workable method.
- Considering the rent control policies outlined in the rent control survey, capping the absolute levels of rent, or capping the rate of increase, were both policies that were endorsed by a proportion of respondents and could be considered by Bristol City Council following a redistribution of power to local authorities.
- In response to these recommendations Bristol City Council had started writing a Private Rented Sector Strategy for Bristol which would articulate its strategic vision, standards and approach to intervening in the Bristol private rented sector.
- Bristol City Council had also consulted on proposals to introduce new property licensing schemes, and this would be going to its Cabinet in February 2024. The first of the two schemes for privately rented housing were for a citywide additional licensing scheme where most Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) not already subject to mandatory licensing would need a licence. The second scheme was a selective licensing scheme in four wards where most other types of private rented accommodation in these areas would need a licence.
- Bristol City Council did inspect properties, did enforce standards and worked with landlords and letting agents to improve standards. It would need to increase the size of the licensing team to deliver the proposals.

Initial research from the Scrutiny Manager identified that there were thirty-five officers who work in Bristol City Council's licensing team, potentially increasing to seventy with the increased demands and funding linked to the additional and selective licensing schemes proposed.

Kirsty Rowlinson, Business Manager, Citizens Advice Southampton, summarised casework relating to the affordability of rent in Southampton. Key points raised in the presentation included the following:

- Since January 2023, Citizens Advice Southampton had dealt with more than 2,200 issues related to housing of which 45% were related to private sector housing.
- Numbers of Section 21 'no fault' evictions were rising extremely rapidly. In the last couple of months there had been a notable increase. The most common reason given for such action was a landlord wanted to raise the rent and tenants had not signed a new tenancy agreement because they could not afford the rent increase.
- Affordability was a major problem for clients. Increasingly, tenants could be expected to pay above the asking price for rental properties and were sometimes expected to take a property without seeing it. Competition was fierce.
- Affordability became even more of a problem when welfare benefits were involved. The majority of its housing clients received some sort of welfare benefit, very often in-work benefits. However, the Local Housing Allowance was hugely out of kilter with actual rental costs.
- Some clients were putting up with poor conditions if their rent was affordable for fear of not finding anywhere else to live.
- Disrepair, particularly damp and mould, was an extremely common issue which was increasing as cost of living issues rose. Tenants could not afford to keep their



properties warm, which increased damp and mould issues, and landlords sometimes could not afford to do repairs.

- Many clients were effectively excluded from the rental market because deposits were rising and letting agents were increasingly asking for guarantors for people on low incomes. Previously deposits were one month's rent but were now increasing to sometimes six or twelve month's rent upfront.
- Monthly spend on essentials such as housing and utilities was significantly higher for everyone than it was two years ago, but the increase was most significant for private renters, although mortgage holders were starting to catch up.
- There was a need to significantly increase the supply of social housing in Southampton. It would improve security of tenure and affordability for a lot of the clients seeking support.

Cecilia Kovacs and Chloe Braddock, Directors, Southampton Tenants Union, summarised the tenants' perspective on rent levels in Southampton. Key points raised were as follows:

- Southampton Tenants Union had conducted a cost of renting survey. Cecilia Kovacs outlined the key findings from the survey:
  - Over 80% had reported an increase in their rent in the recent past or had been notified about an imminent rent rise.
  - About half of the rent rises stayed at under £100 per month, typically around £50. Of those that rose more, some reported £300-400 per month rent rises, the typical being around £200-250 per month.
  - About 20% reported an affordability rate of 30% or below of income spent on rent. The majority had said between 35-50% of income was spent on rent. Some paid as much as 60% of income on rent.
  - Bidding wars were happening in Southampton for private rental properties. Agents were demanding a guarantor to view a property and exemptions were being applied.
  - Rental costs were simply too high, and the burden was not evenly distributed. While things were bad enough for the average renter, they were significantly worse for those at the bottom end of the rental market, who lived in constant fear of being totally squeezed out and becoming homeless.
  - These people were the lifeblood of Southampton and they not only deserved better but needed better.
  - The continual failure of the Council to ensure that a significant proportion of new-build properties were earmarked for social or low-cost housing was particularly concerning. The only long-term solution was for the Council to ensure that a proper supply of social housing was provided to meet the social need.
  - In addition to this, tenants needed firm but fair controls on rent to rein in the market.
  - The Tenants Union would like to see landlords return deposits immediately if a s21 eviction notice had been served.

Liz Mackenzie, Regional Representative, NRLA with Rogel Bell, South Hampshire Chair and Phil Watmough, Committee Member, iHOWZ Landlord Association summarised the current experience of being a landlord. Key points raised in the presentations included:

- Liz Mackenzie
  - NRLA analysis showed a 40% reduction in availability of rental properties but a 140% increase in demand for them in Southampton. For example, in post code SO14 there were 1308 properties listed in 2020 but in September 2023 there were only 540 properties listed.
  - Comments noted from Taylor Hill & Bond landlords regarding the reasons why they felt rent levels had risen included continuous interest rate increases which had a knock-on effect to mortgage repayments, lack of property supply and high tenant demand.
  - Landlords were leaving the market or increasing rents because their finances had been hit by being taxed on their turnover not profit (due to s24 Finance (No 2) Act 2015), fourteen increases in interest rates, increased cost of insurance, higher prices for materials and labour for repairs and maintenance, and in some areas the cost of licences. A backlog in the courts had meant that cases seeking possession were taking up to eight months.
  
- Rogel Bell and Phil Watmough
  - Landlords were losing money. Some landlords were selling their rental properties. Those properties were being bought by first time buyers who typically will not share the accommodation resulting in less dense housing. The effect was shortages which were driving up rents. Supply and demand dictated prices.
  - Reference was made to Big Issue - October 2023: *'An imbalance between supply and demand is the main driver of record-high prices.'*
  - Landlords' costs included the cost of building, which had nearly doubled since 2018, and mortgages at a fifteen year high affecting owner-occupiers and landlords alike.
  - The English Housing Survey (2021/22) reported that 75% of landlords had a mortgage.
  - Rents had been frozen from time to time in the UK and it had always led to black marketeering, rent to rent and homelessness.
  - Reference was made to Christine Whitehead, Emeritus Professor of Housing Economics with the London School of Economics, who had stated in 2020 that *"Rent controls are quite good if they can provide stability, but if all you're providing is stability to people who are already in place, that's not very helpful."*
  - Phil Watmough provided an example of the return on a typical three bed semi-detached property let to students in Southampton. 'Profit' was £76 per month.
  - There was a need to increase the supply of rental properties, especially smaller units. To encourage investment and good landlords iHOWZ recommended that the Council should improve local planning procedures, cooperation between landlords and the Council, bring back training and accreditation to further educate landlords in all matters including rent levels and consider tenant accreditation.

Professor Helen Carr, Professor of Property Law and Social Justice, and Director of the Law School Research Centre, People, Property, Community, University of Southampton, summarised the affordability of private renting. Key issues raised included the following:

- The private rented sector was the most expensive tenure and since 2021 there had been high rent inflation. Costs comprised rents (the lion's share of costs), indirect housing related costs, and increased costs due to the condition of the property.
- Private renting was unaffordable for a large proportion of households and 1.2 million private rented households relied on housing support to pay their rent.
- The Renters (Reform) Bill should make the cost of private renting more predictable. It limits rent increases to once per year, requires a minimum notice of two months for rent increases, ends the use of rent review clauses, and creates a new ground for persistent rent arrears. It does not include rent control.
- Rent control is politically and economically contentious.
- Little research on the interaction between rent control and the rest of housing market, particularly in complex local conditions of UK, had been undertaken.
- The Renters Reform Bill potentially will reveal the stark reality of housing unaffordability.
- Data on market rent levels, used to set Local Housing Allowance, is collected by the Valuation Office, but is limited. Opportunities for partners to gather local rent information on a database to support work of the Valuation Office exist.

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<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	THE CONDITION OF PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	18 JANUARY 2024
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	SCRUTINY MANAGER

<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Executive Director – Corporate Services</b>	
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Mel Creighton</b>	<b>Tel: 023 8083 3528</b>
	<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Mel.creighton@southampton.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Scrutiny Manager</b>	
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Mark Pirnie</b>	<b>Tel: 023 8083 3886</b>
	<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk</b>	

<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>
None

<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>
In accordance with the Inquiry Plan, at the third meeting of the inquiry the Panel will be considering the condition of private sector rented housing in Southampton.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>
(i) The Panel is recommended to consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review.

<b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
1. To enable the Panel to compile a file of evidence in order to formulate findings and recommendations at the end of the review process.

<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>
2. None.

<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>
<b><u>An overview of the condition of private rental property in England</u></b>
3. The housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) is a risk-based evaluation tool to help councils identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. It was introduced under the Housing Act 2004 and applies to residential properties in England and Wales. There are 30 hazards, ranging from excess cold to structural collapse. Hazards are assessed as Category 1 or Category 2, with Category 1 being the most serious.
4. The English Housing Survey 2021 to 2022: private rented sector found <sup>1</sup> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14% of private rented sector homes, or 615,000 occupied dwellings, are estimated to contain a Category 1 hazard under the HHSRS. This is</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> [English Housing Survey 2021 to 2022: private rented sector - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2021-to-2022-private-rented-sector)

	<p>higher than for social rented (4%) or owner occupied (10%) homes and represents an increase of 50,000 compared to the previous year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the private rented sector, households in receipt of housing support (19%) were more likely to live in a home with a Category 1 hazard than those not in receipt of housing support (12%).</li> <li>• The private rented sector had the highest proportion of non-decent homes (23%) while the social rented sector had the lowest (10%). Among owner occupied homes, 13% failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard which is a regulatory standard applied to the social rented sector.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Private rented homes were more likely to have damp than all other tenures. Almost 11% (465,000 dwellings) of private rented homes had dampness compared with 4% (177,000 dwellings) of social rented homes and 2% (262,000 dwellings) of owner-occupied homes.</li> </ul>
	<b>Energy efficiency</b>
5.	The English Housing Survey 2021 to 2022: private rented sector also contains details on energy efficiency levels across housing tenures. In 2021, most private renters lived in homes with an energy efficiency rating (EER) band of A to C (44%, 2 million) followed closely by band D (42%, 1.9 million). The remaining 14% (623,000) lived in homes with an EER band of E to G. <sup>3</sup>
6.	Similar proportions of private renters and owner occupiers lived in homes rated A to C, though private renters (14%), were more likely to live in the least energy efficient homes rated E to G than owner occupiers (10%). Private renters generally lived in poorer performing homes compared with social renters. Over one in ten homes in the private rented sector had an EER of E to G (14%) compared with just 3% of the social rented sector.
7.	In the private rented sector 4.9% of the properties fell into bands F and G in 2021. This is below the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) requirement for all properties to reach at least band E. This compares to 2.5% of the owner-occupied sector and just 0.7% of the social rented sector.
8.	This is a significant factor in the high prevalence of fuel poverty in the sector, with the most recent statistics suggesting that the private rented sector has the highest proportion of households deemed to be living in fuel poverty (24.1%), meaning that, despite the sector making up a much smaller proportion of homes in total, there are only marginally fewer fuel poor households in the private rented sector than the owner occupied sector (representing 36.6% of fuel poor households compared to 40.9%). <sup>4</sup>
9.	A report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that homes that were affordable for tenants relying on housing benefits had energy bills that were 20% higher than the wider private rented sector. <sup>5</sup>
10.	The Government has previously proposed raising the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) to ensure properties meet the requirements to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate Band C. This proposal was shelved

<sup>2</sup> [A decent home: definition and guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/a-decent-home-definition-and-guidance)

<sup>3</sup> [English Housing Survey 2021 to 2022: private rented sector - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2021-to-2022-private-rented-sector)

<sup>4</sup> [Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics LILEE Report 2023 \(2022 data\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-fuel-poverty-statistics-lilee-report-2023-2022-data)

<sup>5</sup> [Housing quality and affordability for lower-income households | Institute for Fiscal Studies \(ifs.org.uk\)](https://ifs.org.uk/housing-quality-and-affordability-for-lower-income-households)


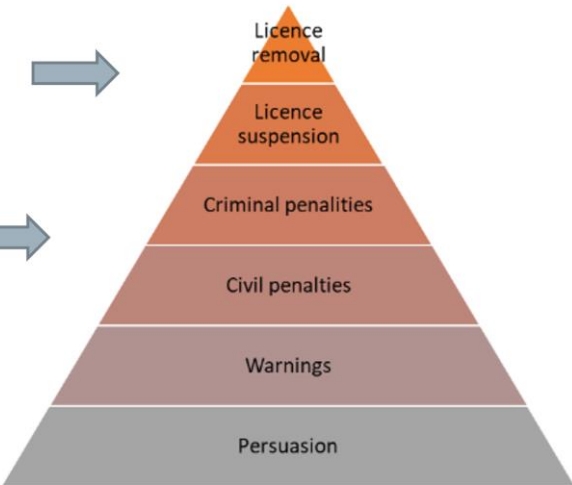
	in 2023. Research has suggested that making these changes could save renters an average of £570 per year. <sup>6</sup>
	<b><u>The impact of poor quality housing</u></b>
11.	Besides the aforementioned financial cost associated with heating energy inefficient properties, the Government's White Paper published in June 2022, 'A Fairer Private Rented Sector', links poor quality housing to undermining renters health and wellbeing, affecting educational attainment and productivity, and reducing pride in local areas. <sup>7</sup>
12.	The White Paper develops these points by identifying the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damp and cold homes can make people ill, and cause respiratory conditions. Children in cold homes are twice as likely to suffer from respiratory problems such as asthma and bronchitis.<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• Homes that overheat in hot summers similarly affect people's health. In the private rented sector alone, this costs the NHS around £340 million a year.<sup>9</sup></li> <li>• Illness, caused or exacerbated by living in a non-decent home, makes it harder for children to engage and achieve well in school, and adults are less productive at work.</li> <li>• Visibly dilapidated houses undermine pride in place and create the conditions for crime, drug-use, and antisocial behaviour.</li> </ul>
13.	Despite the risks associated with poor quality housing, there is currently no legal minimum standard that private rented properties in England must meet, unlike in the social housing sector. This means it is not illegal for a landlord to rent out a property with the most serious health hazards, though they must have an energy safety certificate.
14.	It only becomes an offence when the landlord fails to comply with enforcement action, but that requires the tenant to make a complaint to their local authority. Tenants may avoid reporting problems out of fear of eviction or their rent being increased.
	<b><u>Enforcement</u></b>
15.	The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) sets the overall policy for the private rented sector and oversees the regulatory framework.
16.	Local councils are responsible for regulating the private rented sector in their area and enforcing landlords legal obligations. Councils choose how they regulate based on local priorities and have a range of investigative and enforcement tools available.
17.	Legislation requires local authorities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep housing conditions (incl. overcrowding) under review</li> <li>• take enforcement action where a Category 1 hazard is identified.</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> [UK-Private-Rented-Sector-MEES\\_E3G-Briefing.pdf](#)

<sup>7</sup> [A fairer private rented sector print.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in [A fairer private rented sector print.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) – source: Housing and the health of young children, National Children's Bureau, 2016

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in [A fairer private rented sector print.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) – source: National Audit Office, Regulation of Private Renting 2021

18.	<p>To fulfil legal duties, local authority have wide enforcement powers including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formal “deterrence-focused” regulation i.e. statutory notices, civil penalty notices (up to £30K fines), banning orders, criminal penalties, and rent repayment orders.</li> <li>• other approaches i.e. surveys, licencing, informal actions.</li> </ul> <p>Details of the enforcement powers available to local authorities can be accessed at paragraph 2.2 of the report published for the 16 November meeting of the Inquiry Panel - <a href="#">Appendix 2 - Briefing paper on local authority regulation of PRS.docx.pdf (southampton.gov.uk)</a>.</p>
19.	<p>In their presentation to the Inquiry Panel at the 16 November 2023 meeting, Expert Advisers to the Panel, Professor Helen Carr and Dr Mark Jordan, outlined what good local authority enforcement of the private rented sector looked like. This is represented in the graphic below.</p> <div style="text-align: right; margin-bottom: 10px;">  </div> <h3 style="text-align: center;">What does good enforcement look like?</h3> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 40%;"> <p>Full use of licencing &amp; enforcement powers →</p> <p>Following lack of compliance, response should escalate to formal action →</p> <p>Advice, support as strategies of first choice →</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">  <p><i>Pyramid of responsive regulation – Harris et al (2020)</i> <span style="float: right;">19</span></p> </div> </div>
20.	<p>A study commissioned by DLUHC in 2021 to explore local authority enforcement in the private rented sector<sup>10</sup>, found that the powers and enforcement measures available to local authorities are valuable tools for tackling poor conditions in the private rented sector. However, the findings also identified that local authorities face significant barriers to tackling poor conditions, resulting in an uneven picture of enforcement.</p>
<p><b><u>Barriers to effective enforcement</u></b></p>	
21.	<p>The study commissioned for DLUHC identified a number of barriers to good enforcement by local authorities. These are summarised below.</p>
<p><b>Lack of meaningful data about private renting</b></p>	

<sup>10</sup> [Local authority enforcement in the private rented sector: headline report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



22.	Few local authorities participating in the study had sufficient, comprehensive knowledge of the local private rented stock to inform strategic decision making. Local authorities have a duty under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 to keep housing conditions under review and identify action needed, but local authorities were not always well informed about the private rented sector stock and only a small number carried out regular reviews of the stock.
	<b>Capacity of local enforcement teams</b>
23.	In the study there was a clear correlation between those working proactively, making use of the range enforcement tools and powers, and those with larger teams. The four most enforcement-led local authorities in the case study sample map directly onto the four local authorities with the largest teams.
24.	Enforcement teams are reliant on officers in other departments to progress certain aspects of their work (for example legal departments, revenue and benefits to pursue RROs, housing departments for management orders) and limited capacity in these teams was also found to limit what enforcement officers were able to do.
	<b>The experience and expertise of enforcement teams</b>
25.	The survey showed that local authorities that were most proactive in enforcement had teams comprised of highly experienced and qualified staff. These teams were also multi-disciplinary, including staff from other departments (trading standards, tenancy relations, legal) thereby enhancing the technical expertise overall.
	<b>Political will, strategic commitment and related support of legal teams</b>
26.	There was a clear correlation between local authorities with strategic or political commitment to improving private rented sector conditions through enforcement action, and those more operationally proactive in their efforts to do so. The support of senior managers and legal departments was found to be crucial to officers' ability to proactively enforce. These local authorities had explicit strategic commitment to tackling problems in the private rented sector, for example in their corporate strategy, and the link between strategic commitment and operational capacity was explicitly acknowledged
	<b>Issues relating to the legal framework</b>
27.	Various aspects of the legal framework were found to present challenges to local authorities in their efforts to enforce against poor standards. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number and range of laws that officers have to understand and navigate.</li> <li>• 'Alignment' issues between legislation in different disciplines of relevance to enforcement.</li> <li>• Lack of clarity in some legislation about which local authority department has responsibility to take action.</li> <li>• Questions about whether the HHSRS was the most effective way of assessing and tackling poor standards.</li> <li>• Not having the right legislative tools for tenancy relations offences.</li> </ul>
28.	The study concluded that, with some notable exceptions and pockets of good practice, the barriers identified above, and other challenges, appear to leave many enforcement teams operating a reactive, rather than proactive service that

	is focused on fulfilling statutory duties and targeting only the worst standard properties. Addressing these barriers is likely to result in increased and more effective action to improve conditions and standards in the private rented sector.																																				
	<b><u>What action has been taken or proposed to improve the condition of properties in the private rented sector? - National</u></b>																																				
	<b>Energy efficiency grant schemes</b>																																				
29.	<p>To help improve energy efficiency levels within the private rented sector a patchwork of energy efficiency grant schemes has developed, with a variety of measures supported and differing eligibility criteria for renters and landlords. A brief overview of current schemes, provided by Generation Rent, is given below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Scheme</th> <th>Dates</th> <th>Funding provided by</th> <th>PRS eligibility (generally D-E and F-G with exemption)</th> <th>Measures available for PRS</th> <th>Landlord contribution</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4</b></td> <td>April 2022 – March 2026</td> <td>Energy suppliers via levy on consumer energy bills</td> <td>Means-tested benefits or families with income below threshold; EPC E-G</td> <td>Solid wall insulation or new heating system</td> <td>Supplier's own policy</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>ECO Flex</b></td> <td>October 2018 – March 2026</td> <td>As above, but local authority (LA) referral. Statement of Intent needed from LA.</td> <td>Considered by LA to be fuel poor, on low income or vulnerable</td> <td>LA discretion</td> <td>LA policy</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>GB Insulation Scheme (formerly ECO+)</b></td> <td>Proposed for April 2023 – March 2026<sup>11</sup></td> <td>Energy suppliers via levy on consumer energy bills</td> <td>Council tax bands A-D or low income/ vulnerable households not eligible under ECO 4</td> <td>Insulation (loft and cavity wall only if low income)</td> <td>If solid wall and some other types of insulation installed</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 2</b></td> <td>April 2023 – March 2025</td> <td>UK government</td> <td>Households on less than £30k; off-gas grid properties</td> <td>Insulation and heat pumps</td> <td>At least a third of the total cost. Cap of 4 properties.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD)</b></td> <td>August 2020 – June 2022</td> <td>UK Government (Green Homes Grant)</td> <td>Households on less than £30k; focus on EPC E-G</td> <td>Insulation and low carbon heating</td> <td>At least a third of the total cost</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source - <a href="#">Energy-Efficiency-in-the-Private-Rented-Sector.pdf (generationrent.org)</a></p>	Scheme	Dates	Funding provided by	PRS eligibility (generally D-E and F-G with exemption)	Measures available for PRS	Landlord contribution	<b>Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4</b>	April 2022 – March 2026	Energy suppliers via levy on consumer energy bills	Means-tested benefits or families with income below threshold; EPC E-G	Solid wall insulation or new heating system	Supplier's own policy	<b>ECO Flex</b>	October 2018 – March 2026	As above, but local authority (LA) referral. Statement of Intent needed from LA.	Considered by LA to be fuel poor, on low income or vulnerable	LA discretion	LA policy	<b>GB Insulation Scheme (formerly ECO+)</b>	Proposed for April 2023 – March 2026 <sup>11</sup>	Energy suppliers via levy on consumer energy bills	Council tax bands A-D or low income/ vulnerable households not eligible under ECO 4	Insulation (loft and cavity wall only if low income)	If solid wall and some other types of insulation installed	<b>Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 2</b>	April 2023 – March 2025	UK government	Households on less than £30k; off-gas grid properties	Insulation and heat pumps	At least a third of the total cost. Cap of 4 properties.	<b>Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD)</b>	August 2020 – June 2022	UK Government (Green Homes Grant)	Households on less than £30k; focus on EPC E-G	Insulation and low carbon heating	At least a third of the total cost
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	<b>Government regulation</b>																																				
30.	UK governments have introduced legislation that has greatly expanded the regulatory framework governing the private rented sector. Many of which are designed to improve safety and property conditions within the sector.																																				
31.	The Government's White Paper, 'A Fairer Private Rented Sector', outlines the following actions undertaken since 2015 to improve standards, compliance and enforcement in the private rented sector: <sup>11</sup>																																				

<sup>11</sup> [A fairer private rented sector print.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passed regulations in 2015 requiring private landlords to provide smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in all relevant properties.</li> <li>• Introduced legislation requiring properties to be fit for human habitation. The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 states that landlords must not let out homes with serious hazards that mean the dwelling is not suitable for occupation in that condition.</li> <li>• Require privately rented properties to meet a minimum energy efficiency standard of EPC E, since 2020, to make it easier for renters to keep their homes warm, while supporting aims to make housing more efficient.</li> <li>• Introduced regulations in 2020 to require landlords to carry out electrical safety checks every five years.</li> <li>• Introduced civil penalties of up to £30,000, Banning Orders and a database of rogue landlords and agents through the Housing and Planning Act 2016.</li> <li>• Extended Rent Repayment Orders to cover more offences through the Housing and Planning Act 2016.</li> <li>• Reformed HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) licensing in 2018 to include all properties occupied by five or more persons in two separate households and introduced mandatory minimum room sizes.</li> </ul>
	<b>Renters (Reform) Bill</b>
32.	The Renters (Reform) Bill is currently working its way through Parliament <sup>12</sup> and will legislate for reforms set out in the private rented sector white paper published in June 2022.
33.	A key target within the White Paper is to reduce the number of non-decent rented homes by 50% by 2030. The Renters (Reform) Bill includes a number of proposals designed to help meet this target, including:
34.	<b>Decent Homes Standard in the private rented sector</b> - The Decent Homes Standard is a regulatory standard in the Social Rented Sector but there is no requirement for private rented sector properties to meet any standard of decency. The Renters (Reform) Bill includes a legislative duty on private landlords to meet the Decent Homes Standard, stipulating what tenants should expect from their home, ensuring it is safe, warm and decent. It is hoped that this will raise standards and make sure that all landlords manage their properties effectively, rather than waiting for a renter to complain or a local council to take enforcement action.
35.	<b>Property Portal</b> - A new digital Property Portal will provide a single ‘front door’ to help landlords understand, and demonstrate compliance with, their legal requirements. Landlords will be legally required to register their property on the portal. It is perceived that the Property Portal will increase local councils’ ability to enforce against criminal landlords and it will build on the existing database of Rogue Landlords.
36.	<b>Stronger enforcement powers for local councils</b> - Local authorities will be given new enforcement powers to require landlords to make properties decent, with fines up to £30,000 or a banning order in the worse cases. Tenants will also

<sup>12</sup> [Renters \(Reform\) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

	be able to claim up to 24 months rent back through rent repayment orders up from 12 previously.
37.	Councils will also be given stronger powers to investigate landlords who rent substandard homes, providing them with tools to identify and take enforcement action against the criminal minority.
38.	However, with additional powers, and the removal of some of the identified barriers, the Government expects councils to prioritise private rented sector enforcement and the Renters (Reform) Bill includes a duty that local housing authorities shall 'enforce the landlord legislation in its area'. National oversight of local councils enforcement is expected to be bolstered, including by exploring requirements for councils to report on their housing enforcement activity.
	<b><u>What action has been taken or proposed to improve the condition of properties in the private rented sector? - Local</u></b>
39.	As identified by the DLUHC commissioned study <sup>13</sup> , notable exceptions and pockets of good practice exist within local authorities and a number of councils are proactively using the range of informal and formal powers available to them to tackle poor conditions in the private rented sector.
	<b>The Leeds Rental Standard</b>
40.	The <a href="#">Leeds Rental Standard</a> is a badge developed by Leeds City Council that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes an overarching minimum standard for privately rented accommodation across the city</li> <li>• Aims to bring unity to accreditation</li> <li>• Raises the standards in professional and student lets in the city.</li> </ul>
41.	The Leeds Rental Standard operates under the following existing schemes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Residential Landlords Association Accreditation Scheme</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Unipol Code (unipol.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">ANUK / Unipol National Code (for larger student developments)</a></li> </ul>
42.	Leeds City Council supports and partly funds the Leeds Rental Standard scheme in partnership with the other accrediting organisations - Unipol Student Homes and the National Residential Landlords Association.
43.	Leeds City Council want the Leeds Rental Standard to result in lighter touch regulation allowing the local authority to concentrate their regulatory resources on those that showed no sign of meeting standards voluntarily.
44.	By joining a recognised accreditation scheme and becoming a member of The Leeds Rental Standard landlords that have a licensable property, either through Mandatory Licensing or the Selective Licensing Schemes in Leeds, can get £150 off their license by becoming accredited.
45.	Tenants can access a centralised complaints system operated by Unipol for all tenants no matter what scheme covers the property or landlord. All complaints go to a professional complaints handler who will assist with a resolution to any dispute covered by the scheme.

<sup>13</sup> [Local authority enforcement in the private rented sector: headline report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<b>Additional and Selective Licensing Schemes</b>	
46.	In England and Wales a national mandatory licensing scheme of larger Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) exists. The scheme targets privately rented properties with five or more unrelated people, living together, and sharing some facilities including kitchens and bathrooms.
47.	Under the Housing Act 2004 <sup>14</sup> the local authority also has the powers to introduce two other types of property licensing – <b>additional licensing</b> for smaller HMOs, or <b>selective licensing</b> for other types of privately rented accommodation including properties rented to individuals, couples, or families.
48.	The Housing Act gives powers to the local authority to designate areas, or the whole city, as subject to additional licensing in respect to HMOs that are not already subject to mandatory licensing.
49.	Under section 56(2) of the Act, before introducing additional licensing, the local authority must be confident that a significant number of HMOs, that would come under the scheme, are not being managed effectively, resulting in one or more problems either for tenants or for members of the public.
50.	Section 80 of the Housing Act gives powers to the local authority to apply selective licensing to areas, or the whole city, provided one or more of the following conditions are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low housing demand</li> <li>• A significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Poor housing conditions</li> <li>• High levels of migration</li> <li>• High levels of deprivation</li> <li>• High levels of crime.</li> </ul>
51.	Areas subject to selective licensing would be inspected during the licensing period to assess their condition. Where poor conditions are found, action can be taken to identify and rectify issues, and where appropriate, using relevant enforcement powers, bring these properties up to the licensing standards.
52.	The Housing Act sets a maximum threshold for selective licensing of either 20% of the geographic area or 20% of privately rented homes. If the 20% threshold is exceeded, an application to the Secretary of State is required.
<b>Selective Licensing in Nottingham<sup>15</sup></b>	
53.	Nottingham City Council’s Selective Licensing scheme began in August 2018 and is aimed at tackling poor property conditions, high levels of antisocial behaviour, crime, and deprivation. To date, the Council’s team of 75 officers has received over 29,000 applications. The provision of advice to licence holders and compliance inspections led to approximately 25% of properties being improved.
54.	The Council has also had success in finding unlicensed properties and taking enforcement action against owners who don’t comply. They have issued 47 Civil Penalty Notices and 13 landlords have been prosecuted for 49 offences at 30

<sup>14</sup> [The Housing Act 2004: Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Selective Licensing of Other Residential Accommodation \(England\) General Approval 2015 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270422/the_housing_act_2004_licensing_of_houses_in_multiple_occupation_and_selective_licensing_of_other_residential_accommodation_english_general_approval_2015.pdf)

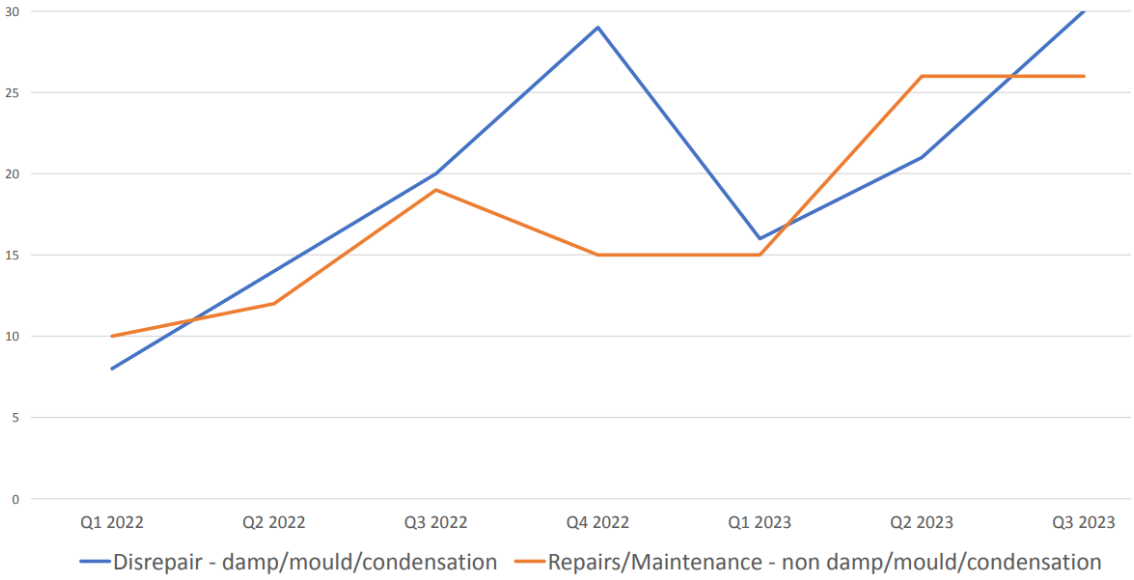
<sup>15</sup> Case study included in [A fairer private rented sector print.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270422/a_fairer_private_rented_sector_print.pdf) – p51

	properties, 27 of these relate to Selective Licensing. This has helped the team to secure 1,305 licence applications from previously unlicensed properties. The scheme also led to a reduction in the proportion of privately rented homes with EPC energy rating below 'D' from 25.9% to 15.6%.																														
55.	To support landlords, the Council also offers a lower Selective Licence fee for accredited landlords through partners Decent and Safe Homes (DASH) and Unipol. This has seen the number of accredited landlords rise from 650 to 1,715 (January 2022). Approximately a third of all individually licensed properties are now accredited, with these landlords letting over 8,300 properties (January 2022), up from 3,917 in 2018.																														
56.	Results from the survey commissioned by DLUHC in 2021 <sup>16</sup> suggested that selective licensing is not widespread, with 88% of survey respondents reporting no selective licensing areas. Selective licensing was reported by case study local authorities to be essential to efforts to tackle poor standards, with one authority going as far as to suggest that 'I don't think we have the tools without licensing'. Selecting licensing is not appropriate for local authorities where problems are not concentrated, but a sizeable minority of case study local authorities reported that selective licensing would help them tackle poor standards but had not been pursued.																														
	<b><u>An overview of the condition of private rental property in Southampton</u></b>																														
57.	Analysis of Southampton's Tenants Survey <sup>17</sup> , conducted in October 2023, identified that over half (59%) of respondents said that they had experienced issues with repairs or maintenance with their landlord.																														
58.	<p>Respondents were also asked if they have ever reported problems about the condition of their home to their landlord. The response is identified below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Issue</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Damp/mould</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Plumbing issues</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>General/continuous state of disrepair</td> <td>37%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Broken boiler</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poor insulation (e.g. windows, walls)</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Broken windows (e.g. broken glass, closing mechanism)</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roof issues (e.g. leaks)</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poor ventilation</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poor quality heating (e.g. old storage heaters)</td> <td>19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not reported any of these</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insect infestation</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unsafe/exposed wiring</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leaking radiators</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Key findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Just under half (48%) of respondents have reported issues with damp or mould to their landlord</li> <li>17% of respondents did not report any of the listed issues to their landlord</li> </ul> <p>Source – <a href="#">Southampton Private Rented Sector Survey</a></p>	Issue	Percentage	Damp/mould	48%	Plumbing issues	43%	General/continuous state of disrepair	37%	Broken boiler	30%	Poor insulation (e.g. windows, walls)	25%	Broken windows (e.g. broken glass, closing mechanism)	23%	Roof issues (e.g. leaks)	21%	Poor ventilation	20%	Poor quality heating (e.g. old storage heaters)	19%	Not reported any of these	17%	Insect infestation	12%	Unsafe/exposed wiring	10%	Leaking radiators	7%	Other	7%
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<sup>16</sup> [Local authority enforcement in the private rented sector: headline report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Southampton Private Rented Sector Tenants Survey](#)



59.	Of those who reponded, 83% have reported issues about the condition of the property to their landlord. Damp or mould (48%), plumbing issues (43%) and general state of disrepair (37%) were the 3 most commonly reported problems.																								
60.	The condition of properties within the private rented sector was also raised by Kirsty Rowlinson from Citizen’s Advice Southampton at the 21 December Inquiry Panel meeting.																								
61.	Analysis of their casework identified that disrepair, particularly damp and mould is a common issue. Feedback noted that, unsurprisingly, it is increasing as cost of living issues rise. Tenants can’t afford to keep their properties warm, which increases damp and mould issues, and landlords sometimes can’t afford to undertake repairs.																								
62.	<p>The chart below shows the rise in Citizen’s Advice Southampton casework related to disrepair since Quarter 1 2022<sup>18</sup>:</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="306 757 1445 1335"> <caption>Citizen’s Advice Southampton casework related to disrepair</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>Disrepair - damp/mould/condensation</th> <th>Repairs/Maintenance - non damp/mould/condensation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Q1 2022</td> <td>8</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q2 2022</td> <td>15</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q3 2022</td> <td>20</td> <td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q4 2022</td> <td>29</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q1 2023</td> <td>16</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q2 2023</td> <td>21</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q3 2023</td> <td>30</td> <td>26</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Quarter	Disrepair - damp/mould/condensation	Repairs/Maintenance - non damp/mould/condensation	Q1 2022	8	10	Q2 2022	15	12	Q3 2022	20	19	Q4 2022	29	15	Q1 2023	16	15	Q2 2023	21	26	Q3 2023	30	26
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63.	At the inaugural meeting of the inquiry, Southampton City Council’s Service Manager for Private Sector Housing, informed the Panel that the Private Sector Housing Service receives around 500 service requests per year relating to disrepair. Issues include, damp and mould, excess cold, leaks and lack of fire detection.																								
64.	Demand for the service is very high and always increases during the colder months, generally due to heating related issues and damp or mould.																								
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	<b>SASSH - Southampton Accreditation Scheme for Student Housing</b>																								
65.	The scheme is run in partnership between the University of Southampton, Southampton Solent University and Southampton City Council. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that students have access to a supply of high quality, safe accommodation that is well managed.																								

<sup>18</sup> [Citizens Advice Southampton presentation to 21/12/23 Inquiry Panel meeting](#)

66.	To advertise a property through the scheme, a landlord must declare that the property meets the required SASSH standards. This is a self-accreditation scheme and relies on landlords making accurate assessments of their property against the SASSH standards.
	<b>National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) / iHOWZ Accreditation Schemes</b>
67.	In addition to the student focused SASSH Scheme, the NRLA and iHOWZ, both of which are represented in Southampton, run accreditation schemes. Accredited landlord members are able to demonstrate their knowledge, training, skills and intentions to manage properties and tenancies in line with best practice, helping build their reputation with tenants and Local Authorities.
	<b>HMO Licensing and Additional Licensing Scheme</b>
68.	At the 16 November meeting of the Inquiry Panel, Southampton City Council's Private Sector Housing Manager referred to the Council's HMO Licensing and Additional Licensing Scheme.
69.	There are approximately 6,000-7,000 HMOs in the city. The Council has a statutory duty to licence all HMOs occupied by five or more persons in two or more separate households.
70.	In the city we have approximately 2,500 of these Mandatory HMOs, which require licensing every five years. All licensed HMOs must meet certain conditions concerning safety and amenities and be properly managed so as to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the local neighbourhood. Failure to licence and failure to comply with conditions are offences which can result in enforcement.
71.	Southampton City Council has also operated additional HMO licensing schemes in certain wards within the city. Additional licensing schemes allow SCC to licence smaller HMOs, and 'cluster flats within purpose-built student blocks not captured by the Mandatory scheme.
72.	Schemes have covered the four central wards of Bevois, Bargate, Portswood and Swaythling and also the western wards of Shirley, Freemantle, Bassett and Millbrook.
73.	Additional licensing schemes have captured another 2,500 HMOs across the city. These schemes can only run for five years and run on a 'cost recovery' basis. The most recent scheme covering the central wards ended on September 30 <sup>th</sup> 2023.
74.	The HMO Licensing and Additional Licensing Schemes will be considered in detail, alongside the Council's approach to enforcement, at the 15 February meeting of the Inquiry Panel.
	<b>Energy Efficiency Programmes</b>
75.	The Council, with partners, have supported a number of programmes designed to improve the energy efficiency of homes within the private rented sector in Southampton. An overview of these initiatives will be presented at the meeting. The Council's current <a href="#">Forward Plan</a> of key decisions includes the procurement of a new contract to provide an affordable warmth delivery programme from 2024-2029 called Southampton Healthy Homes.



	<b>Invited Guests</b>
76.	<p>To provide context to the information above, a number of guests have been invited to present at the third meeting of the inquiry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cllr Shaban Mohammed - Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Modernisation; Housing Needs, Homelessness and Private Rented Sector at the London Borough of Newham</b></li> <li>• <b>Helen Masterson - Head of Private Sector Housing Standards, London Borough of Newham</b></li> </ul> <p>Cllr Mohammed and Helen Masterson have been invited to discuss Newham’s selective licensing scheme. The scheme was approved by the Minister for Housing and Homelessness in December 2022 on the basis of housing conditions, significant and persistent anti-social behaviour and high levels of deprivation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adam Goulden – Chief Executive, the Environment Centre</b></li> </ul> <p>To provide context to the statistics outlined in this report, the Chief Executive of <a href="#">the Environment Centre</a> has been asked to provide an insight into the condition of private rented accommodation in Southampton and to outline the Environment Centre’s work, with landlords and tenants, in support of improved conditions in the private rented sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Southampton Tenants Union</b></li> </ul> <p>At the 18 January meeting the Tenants Union have been asked to provide a tenants perspective on the condition of rental property in Southampton.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Representatives from Landlord Organisations</b></li> </ul> <p>Liz Mackenzie, Regional Representative from the NRLA, Sam Watkins, Senior Policy Officer at the NRLA and Peter Littlewood, Chief Executive Officer at iHOWZ have been asked to provide the Panel with a landlords perspective on the condition of private rented accommodation in Southampton.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ros Lyon - Head of Occupancy and Residential Customer Services, University of Southampton</b></li> </ul> <p>Ros Lyon has been invited to inform the Panel about SASSH (Southampton Accreditation Scheme for Student Housing) and proposals to improve the scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professor Helen Carr and Dr Mark Jordan from the <a href="#">People, Property and Community Research Centre, Southampton Law School, University of Southampton</a></b></li> </ul> <p>Expert Advisers to the Panel, Professor Carr and Dr Jordan, will provide an overview of legislation relating to the condition of rental properties and examples of approaches being applied, or considered, elsewhere to improve housing conditions in the private sector.</p>

77.	The invited guests will take questions from the Panel relating to the evidence provided. Copies of any presentations will be made available to the Panel and will be published on the Inquiry Panel's pages on the Council website:  <a href="#">Browse meetings - Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - How do we get a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton?   Southampton City Council.</a>
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**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

**Capital/Revenue/Property/Other**

78. Resources to support the scrutiny review will come from existing budgets.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:**

79. The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.

**Other Legal Implications:**

80. None

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

81. None

**POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS**

82. None

<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	No
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<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	None
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**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices**

1. None

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

1. None

**Equality Impact Assessment**

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	No
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**Data Protection Impact Assessment**

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?	No
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**Other Background Documents**

**Other Background documents available for inspection at:**

<b>Title of Background Paper(s)</b>	<b>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential</b>
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1. None