

Landlord newsletter

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



Issue 10 – Summer 2024

Welcome to our summer newsletter. In this edition we are covering local updates and news about our next landlord forum coming up on 19 September. National initiatives relating to the private rented sector are obviously progressing under the new Government and the latest news will be covered at the landlord forum.



Local updates & information

The Council targets section 257 HMOs using street surveys

In our [last newsletter](#) we went into some detail about section 257 HMOs. These are HMOs defined under section 257 of the Housing Act 2004 - buildings converted into self-contained flats which do not meet the 1991 Building Regulation standards and where at least one-third of the flats are rented (i.e. less than two-thirds are owner occupied). In Camden, we only license s:257 HMOs where less than half of the flats are owner-occupied.

Next landlord forum

We will be holding another landlord forum on Thursday 19 September at 2pm. This will be an online only event over Zoom.

Details regarding the programme will be sent our closer to the time, but we already have a speaker from the NRLA booked to provide an update on the latest news for landlords.

If any landlords or agents have ideas for speakers at this or future forums, please email janet.wade@camden.gov.uk.

Details of the last forum on 8 November can be found on the [Council's website](#).

The Council is currently surveying streets in Camden looking for unlicensed s:257 HMOs.

We have so far visited 450 suspected unlicensed properties in the Kilburn/West Hampstead area and enforcement officers will now be carrying out further investigations. Some of these were identified as priority because of disrepair and fire safety.

If you are the freeholder or a managing agent it is essential you ensure your property is licensed. If a landlord or property manager does not apply for an HMO licence, they can be prosecuted or fined.

The licence will include the building, any common parts (entrance ways, stairs and landings) and any flats under the direct control of the proposed licence holder.

Making your rental property more energy efficient

Now is a good time to think about carrying out works to improve the energy efficiency of your rental property.

Not only will this make your property more comfortable for your tenants and cheaper for them to heat it during the colder months, but will also protect the fabric of the property by helping prevent damp and mould growth.

This will also mean that any excess cold hazards are addressed before the HMO team come to visit and that you will be meeting the Decent Homes Standard which is likely to be introduced for the private rented sector sometime soon. It will also ensure your energy performance certificate (EPC) meets the requirements of being at least E or above (not F or G).

The following are works that will help, although the exact nature of the improvements will obviously depend on the type of property:

- Insulation to external walls and roofs

New partnership with Safer Renting

The private sector housing team are pleased to announce a new partnership with [Safer Renting](#) to provide specialist advice, support and advocacy to assist privately rented tenants. Colleagues from Safer Renting will work in conjunction with our tenancy relations officer to prevent homelessness, investigate illegal eviction and harassment, and support private renters to negotiate better conditions in their homes.

Compliance with HMO licences

The HMO enforcement team have increased their compliance inspections and are finding a number of properties where landlords and managing agents have not carried out the works necessary or have not paid attention to the permitted number of people who can occupy a bedroom. In addition they are sometimes finding that the managing agent has changed and the HMO licensing team have not been notified.

It is important for landlords and agents to carefully read through all of the HMO licence on receipt and make sure that undersized bedrooms are not used, you are aware of the permitted number of occupants for the bedrooms and the property as a whole, and that all work is carried out within the timescales specified. This includes works listed in any attached informative that relates to hazards and the management regulations.

Where the private sector housing team have particular concerns, the compliance visits are being carried out unannounced.

Parking in Camden

At the last landlord forum, questions were asked about the difficulty of parking in the borough for builders and agents. This matter was followed up with the Head of Parking Operations.

He pointed out that builders can [apply for a trade permit](#) - intended to be used by

- Upgrading heating systems
- Double glazing

At the same times as these works, you should ensure you have mechanical ventilation (ducted to the outside) in your kitchens and bathrooms to avoid condensation and mould growth.

You can find more information on the [Council's website](#).

If you are a landlord and your property has an energy performance certificate rating between band D and G, you can [apply for a grant to improve the energy efficiency](#) of the property to band C.

Important things to note when making an HMO licence application

We have asked the licensing team for a list of the most common issues they encounter with HMO licence applications.

These are the top tips to consider before making an application:

- Have valid gas safety and electrical certificates ready (and if applicable fire safety certificates)
- Apply for an HMO licence renewal before the old licence expires. You can apply up to 30 days before expiry.
- If not already provided, you must submit proof of works to comply with the previous HMO licence.
- If circumstances change, such as the landlord's address, or the property is sold, or the managing agent changes, you should email the HMO licensing team as soon as possible.
- If you have problems with your application e.g. logging in, uploading documents etc. then contact the HMO licensing team. Documents can be emailed to them.

builders, trades and other service providers who require on-street parking when working for a local resident or business. In this case there is no need to ask the resident to be involved.

Agents who are based in the borough can [apply for a business parking permit](#) if they have a vehicle that is required for day to day use.

Camden Lettings

The Council are looking for property in Camden or neighbouring boroughs to help their fight against homelessness.

The [Camden Lettings team](#) are looking for studio flats or one to four bedroom properties at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.

What they offer:

- A generous cash incentive
- Rent guarantee insurance
- Extensive support and advice to landlords and tenants throughout the life of the tenancy
- Reliable, long-term tenants for at least 12 months
- A free London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAS) voucher worth £100

Interested in letting your property?

Get in touch with the Camden Lettings team on **020 7974 4158** or at camdenlettings@camden.gov.uk

Trading standards and private sector housing

The team are pleased to welcome two dedicated trading standards officers who will be concentrating on managing and letting agents in terms of checking on fees charged to tenants, unfair trading practices (affecting both tenants and landlords), consumer rights, membership of the letting

- The fee is split into two parts. Part 1 must be paid at the time of the application. Part 2 before the final licence is granted, although it can be paid at the same time as part 1.
- If you are an overseas landlord, you will need to appoint a UK -based managing agent.

These are just some of the things to be aware of. Look at this [complete checklist](#) before submitting an application, either for the first time or an renewal. If the team has to chase the necessary documentation then the application might be rejected or a one-year licence issued (instead of a five-year licence).

The email for the HMO licensing team is hmolicensing@camden.gov.uk.

agents redress scheme and client money protection. They will also be assisting with ensuring both agents and landlords issue the correct tenancy agreement and that rental properties have an energy performance certificate (EPC) of at least E or above (not F or G).

Rent to London students

The University of London is offering landlords the opportunity to list their room or property on their Property Platform. Advertise your property to students and staff from London's top universities, with listing fees starting at £25 per property for 12 months and discounts for landlords with larger portfolios.

There are a considerable number of students looking for accommodation, and there are currently over 15,000 live registrations on the platform. Camden is always a popular borough for students to rent in, particularly those attending institutions in the Bloomsbury area. There is also high demand for short lets (up to 6 months).

For more information, see their [website](#).

Alternatively, contact the University via 0207 862 8880 or housing@london.ac.uk.

Criminal landlords

Latest banning order against Camden landlord

A banning order has been granted by the [first tier tribunal \(FTT\)](#) preventing a landlord in Camden from letting or managing two properties which he owned. The tribunal heard evidence about harassment suffered by the tenants and two improvement notices which had not been complied with for a number of years leading to three prosecutions. The properties are now being managed by a responsible managing agent.

Unlicensed HMO

Private sector housing officers attended a property in Kilburn High Road following a complaint. They found it to be an unlicensed HMO. There were water leaks dripping onto the bed of an occupier who was 30 weeks pregnant, as well as severe mould growth. The inside of the consumer unit was not protected, exposing all of the live wires. The conditions were so poor that officers had to take emergency remedial action under the Housing Act 2004. This means that the council organised emergency repairs on the

Camden secures record fine against landlord's failure to comply with a planning enforcement notice

Following a long running case, the Council [successfully prosecuted](#) two Camden landlords who failed to comply with a planning enforcement notice originally issued against substandard flats in a section 257 HMO in 2010.

The residential units, by reason of their size in terms of bedroom numbers and floorspace, did not meet Camden's planning standards.

Earlier this year, the Court ordered a fine of £350,000 and full costs of £247,011.64.

property and some of the occupiers were rehoused by the council. The landlord was served with civil penalty notices totalling £38,500.

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.