

Better standards for Nottingham's private tenants as private rented housing licensing scheme gets green light

Private tenants in Nottingham will benefit from better quality accommodation and greater protection from rogue landlords after the Government approved a new licensing scheme.

The City Council scheme covering over 30,000 privately rented homes in Nottingham is the largest outside London to be given approval by the Secretary of State.

A report by the BRE (Building Research Establishment) Group estimated that 21% of Nottingham's private rented properties are likely to have 'Category 1 hazards', examples of this type of hazard could include exposed wiring, a dangerous boiler, cold bedrooms, a leaking roof, mould on walls or ceilings and vermin infestation. Selective Licensing will help ensure these issues are addressed.

Extensive consultation with landlords, tenants and other interested parties took place on the proposed scheme which will mean that in selected areas of the city, landlords will need to obtain a licence from the Council and meet certain obligations to ensure tenant safety and good management of the property.

Money raised through the scheme will help to cover the cost and the Council hopes to be able to introduce the scheme from summer this year. Between now and the scheme coming into effect, landlords should find out if it will affect them and what they should do to prepare for this. Over 90% of privately rented houses and flats - around 31,000 properties - are estimated to benefit from this scheme.

Councillor Jane Urquhart, the City Council's Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing & Heritage, said: "I'm pleased that Nottingham's selective licensing proposal has been approved by the Government. In areas that are covered it will help to improve standards for private tenants and landlords will know exactly what they must do to be able to rent their properties out.

"Having a Selective License will allow landlords to demonstrate that they provide good accommodation for tenants. The cost of licensing will be reduced for responsible landlords who gain Nottingham Standard Accreditation via DASH or Unipol. Tenants will also be able to check on both licensing and accreditation which will help to drive up private rented standards.

"This is a major step forward in improving living standards for many city residents."

Accredited landlords can use the Nottingham Standard accreditation mark to show that they adhere to the standards required.

This will be a further tool to help tackle rogue and criminal landlords who operate poor housing and don't manage their houses well, having a negative impact on the tenants and neighbourhoods.

The proposed cost of the licence is to be confirmed and is subject to final approval by the Council's Executive Board. However, it is likely to be less than £2 per week, per property for accredited landlords and no more than £3 a week for non-accredited landlords.

Landlords can find if their property is covered by Selective Licensing at geoserver.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/myproperty/. There is also a link to more information including a list of FAQs and a short landlord good practice guide.

The Council recognises good landlords who go above the legal minimum, and those who are members of the Nottingham Standard accreditation scheme (DASH and Unipol) will receive a discount on the licence application fee. There is information about the Nottingham Standard at <https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/nottinghamstandard>