# Sadiq Khan's rent control push risks exacerbating London’s housing crisis



Sadiq Khan’s relentless push for rent controls in London exposes his continued disconnect from sound economic principles and the realities of Britain’s housing market. Despite overwhelming resistance from the central government and widespread opposition within the political establishment, he persists in branding these policies as necessary, ignoring the detrimental effects they would have on investment and supply.

Khan's calls for devolved rent control powers are politically motivated stunt, aimed at appealing to an overly simplistic narrative of tenant hardship, while ignoring the long-term damage such interference could inflict. His attempt to draw parallels with Edinburgh’s recent rent cap experiments fail to acknowledge the complexities and failures of such measures — Edinburgh’s policies are set to be abolished next year, a clear indication that rent controls are ineffective and counterproductive across the UK.

Throughout his tenure, Khan has championed misguided proposals like establishing a London Private Rent Commission, which critics rightly warn could stifle growth in the rental sector. His proposals for a landlord registry and rent caps amount to economic illiteracy, threatening to deter new investment and disincentivise landlords from participating in the market altogether. Instead of promoting affordable housing through genuine structural reforms, he relies on populist measures that risk shrinking the available rental stock, ultimately driving prices even higher.

The Labour government’s recent refusal to devolve rent control powers marks another capitulation to failed policy trends. Their outright rejection — coupled with dismissive language towards proposals aimed at regulating the private sector — reveals an inability to understand or address the root causes of housing unaffordability. Meanwhile, their focus remains on short-term political gestures rather than long-term market solutions.

Opponents argue that rent controls could worsen London’s housing crisis by discouraging landlords and reducing supply. The National Residential Landlords Association warns that such measures threaten to make the housing shortage even more severe. Politicians like the Conservative shadow housing secretary have criticized Khan’s rent control crusade as "ideologically driven and economically illiterate," highlighting the risk of creating a market where rental homes become scarce and increasingly expensive.

Instead of doubling down on failed policies, the government should promote policies that encourage investment, reduce red tape, and increase housing supply. Khan’s apparent obsession with rent caps ignores the fundamental economic principle that a free market, with appropriate safeguards, is the most effective way to deliver affordable housing in the long run.

Khan’s rhetoric and continued campaigning for rent controls represent a political distraction—a desperate attempt to win votes amid mounting housing dissatisfaction. His promises of rent freezes and caps are empty gestures that will do nothing but impair London’s housing market. The push for greater regulation is a step backwards, risking limited supply and higher costs for tenants, rather than the meaningful reforms that could truly address London’s housing crisis. Ultimately, the pursuit of short-term political gain is incompatible with the long-term economic resilience this city needs.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://propertyindustryeye.com/sadiq-khan-renews-call-for-rent-controls-in-london/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-demands-powers-to-bring-rents-down> - In July 2019, Mayor Sadiq Khan published a report outlining the need for rent control in London. The report proposed establishing a London Private Rent Commission to implement and enforce measures to reduce rents and keep them at lower levels. Despite lacking statutory powers over the private rented sector, Khan has been advocating for renters' rights, including campaigning to end letting agents' charges to tenants and setting up a public database to 'name and shame' rogue landlords and letting agents.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/sadiq-khan-rent-controls-london-labour-government-housing-rents-mayor-b1176698.html> - In August 2024, the new Labour Government ruled out granting Sadiq Khan the power to impose rent controls across private tenancies in London. Despite Khan's calls for a 'London Private Rent Commission' to implement caps on landlords' charges, ministers stated they had 'no plans whatsoever to devolve rent control powers.' This decision followed previous rejections from the Conservative government.
4. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/07/19/mayor-of-london-sadiq-khan-wants-rent-controls-in-london.html> - In July 2019, Mayor Sadiq Khan called for new powers to impose rent controls in London. He proposed caps on existing rent levels, a universal register of landlords, and a private rent commission to gradually reduce rents. Khan highlighted that renting a one-bedroom flat in London was now as expensive as a three-bedroom house in other parts of England, underscoring the need for rent control.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2022/mar/09/sadiq-khan-renews-call-for-private-rent-controls-in-london> - In March 2022, Mayor Sadiq Khan renewed his call for rent controls in London, proposing a two-year freeze on private rents. He argued that this would save tenants an average of £3,000 during a period when other costs, notably for energy, were rising rapidly. Khan's proposal aimed to address the affordability crisis faced by private renters in the capital.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/mar/03/sadiq-khan-says-london-election-will-be-vote-on-rent-controls> - In March 2020, Mayor Sadiq Khan stated that the upcoming London mayoral election would serve as a referendum on rent controls. He criticised the Conservative government's refusal to grant powers for rent control, emphasising the need to respect the democratic will of Londoners who supported such measures. Khan's campaign focused on implementing rent controls to protect tenants from rising costs.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jul/19/sadiq-khan-calls-for-new-powers-to-impose-london-rent-controls> - In July 2019, Mayor Sadiq Khan called for new powers to impose rent controls in London. He sought devolved powers to establish a universal register of landlords, enforce standards, and create a London private rent commission to design and implement an effective system of rent control. Khan highlighted the rising proportion of Londoners renting privately and the need for fundamental change in the private rented sector.