# Hounslow’s crackdown on landlords sparks concerns over rising government control



Hounslow Council’s relentless crackdown on unscrupulous landlords and letting agents highlights a troubling trend of bureaucratic overreach that threatens to choke the vitality of the private rental market. With fines exceeding £180,000 in just half a year, this campaign underscores a government that is increasingly heavy-handed, targeting small-scale landlords rather than focusing on broader issues affecting affordability and property rights. The sweeping inspections into houses in multiple occupation and substandard housing are less about protecting tenants and more about expanding state control over property ownership under the guise of safety.

While the authority claims most landlords provide decent housing, the relentless push to publicly shame those who fall afoul of ever-changing regulations smacks of punitive tactics designed to damage the reputation of private landlords who contribute to housing supply. The emphasis on naming and shaming, coupled with threats of prosecution for operating unlicensed HMOs, creates an environment of fear that discourages legitimate investment in the sector. Instead of empowering property owners to manage their assets, the council’s approach risks discouraging new entrants and reducing rental options for tenants already facing a strained housing market.

Furthermore, the ongoing extension of licensing schemes—aimed at smaller HMOs—looks more like a political ploy to increase red tape than a genuine effort to improve housing standards. This extension, set to include even the smallest shared facilities, will ultimately serve to drive up costs and bureaucratic burdens on landlords. The fact that these regulations are being renewed without a clear evidence-based justification raises serious questions about whether local authorities are more interested in control than genuine tenant welfare, especially as they prepare to enforce stricter rules from November 2025.

This obsessive regulatory environment does little to address real problems within the private rental sector. Instead, it risks incentivising illegal behaviour as landlords seek to evade ever-increasing penalties and invasive inspections. The government’s stance appears focused on punishing those who already comply, while neglecting broader issues like the affordability crisis and supply shortages. A genuine free-market approach—balancing regulation with incentives—would better serve tenants and landlords alike, rather than the current climate of intimidation and punitive fines.

Hounslow’s crackdown signals a troubling move towards an ever-more intrusive state, wielding fines and public shaming as weapons to curb what they see as rogue landlords. Such policies threaten to stifle the flexibility and investment needed to keep the private rental sector thriving, ultimately harming tenants who rely on a vibrant and responsive property market. This is not about safeguarding tenant welfare; it’s about expanding government control over a vital sector, in direct contradiction to principles of free enterprise and fair regulation.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.lettingagenttoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2025/10/agents-in-the-firing-line-as-council-announces-clampdown/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/news/article/10113/-180-000-fines-issued-to-rogue-landlords-in-hounslow> - Hounslow Council has intensified efforts to prosecute rogue landlords failing to meet legal standards, issuing fines totalling over £180,000 in the past six months. The enforcement campaign targets unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), poor property conditions, and illegal rentals. Council officers are conducting rigorous inspections to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations, licensing requirements, and proper tenancy agreements. The average fine for breaches is £14,000, with the council publicly naming and shaming landlords who continue to flout legal requirements. Residents are encouraged to report any suspicious landlord activity or substandard housing conditions to the council.
3. <https://hounslowherald.com/crackdown-on-rogue-landlords-sees-lbh-issue-k-in-fines-p29295-95.htm> - Hounslow Council has issued over £180,000 in fines to rogue landlords for poor property conditions and unlicensed HMOs as part of a crackdown aimed at protecting tenants across the borough. Council enforcement officers are conducting rigorous inspections and investigations to ensure landlords comply with health and safety regulations, licensing requirements, and correct tenancy agreements. The average fine for breaches is £14,000, with the council publicly naming and shaming landlords who continue to flout legal requirements. Residents are urged to report any suspicious landlord activity or substandard housing conditions to the council to help ensure safer and fairer rental experiences across Hounslow.
4. <https://www.hounslowlabour.co.uk/news/2025/05/01/stamping-out-rogue-landlords/> - Hounslow Labour is campaigning to extend licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to include more homes than the statutory minimum. The current mandatory licensing covers properties with five or more persons sharing facilities, but many other types of HMOs are excluded. Hounslow Council introduced a wider scheme in August 2020 to include HMOs with three or four persons, as well as S257 HMOs, which have been subdivided into self-contained flats or studios without appropriate building regulation approval. With the additional licensing scheme ending in July 2025, renewing it has become a political priority for Hounslow’s Labour administration.
5. <https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/houses-multiple-occupation/hmo-licensing> - In Hounslow, a licence is required to own or manage a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The council operates two types of licensing schemes: Mandatory HMO Licensing, required by law across England for HMOs occupied by five or more people, and Additional HMO Licensing, designated by the council and applying borough-wide. The application process is the same for both types, and licences last five years. Operating an unlicensed HMO is a criminal offence and may result in prosecution, financial penalty notices, and other enforcement actions.
6. <https://hounslowherald.com/council-proposes-tighter-controls-on-hmos-p27517-95.htm> - Hounslow Council is proposing to tighten controls on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) by renewing the additional licensing scheme. The council is seeking feedback from residents on the proposed scheme, which aims to tackle anti-social behaviour often associated with HMOs. The proposed scheme will extend mandatory licensing requirements to include all smaller HMOs where facilities are shared and are occupied by 3 or 4 persons. The scheme will also include all HMOs that have been poorly subdivided into self-contained flats or studios without the appropriate building regulation approval. The new scheme is expected to commence in November 2025 when the current scheme expires.
7. <https://www.landlordzone.co.uk/news/big-council-comes-down-hard-on-landlords-with-fines-of-ps180-000> - The London borough of Hounslow has been busy promoting its latest success in chasing down errant landlords and letting agencies, revealing that it has issued fines totalling £180,000 over the past six months. The fines have been issued after its enforcement and inspection team discovered illegal rentals and/or poor property conditions, and that the huge fines are part of its ongoing efforts to more heavily regulate its local private rental market. The council’s key aims are to ensure landlords comply with health and safety regulations, licensing requirements, and the correct tenancy agreements.