# Health and safety risks in Hackney shared homes double national average



A recent report by Hackney Council has revealed that health and safety risks in certain types of shared homes within the borough are nearly double the national average. The study focused on houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)—properties rented out to three or more different households—and found that 23 per cent of these contain ‘serious hazards.’ Nationally, the average figure stands at 10 per cent.

The report categorises serious hazards under the Housing Act 2004 into two groups: category 1, representing “serious and immediate threats to health and safety,” and category 2, which, although less severe, still require attention. Excluding HMOs, 15 per cent of private rental properties across Hackney are also reported to have serious hazards.

Geographically, some wards face higher risks than others. Cazenove ward has the highest number of rented properties flagged for significant risk, with 615 such homes identified. In contrast, Hoxton West has the lowest, with 98 affected properties. Stoke Newington stands out as one of the most hazardous wards for renters, with nearly a third (595) of private rentals—including HMOs—noted as having serious hazards.

Fire safety concerns dominate the risks, accounting for 63 per cent of the identified hazards in rented accommodation borough-wide.

This report has emerged ahead of a Hackney Council cabinet meeting scheduled for this evening, where councillors will consider proposals to make it mandatory for all private landlords in Hackney to obtain a licence for letting their properties. The council is proposing licence fees of £925 for standard applications and £1,400 for an additional licence applicable to certain types of HMOs.

Hackney’s Labour-run administration has previously trialled a more limited landlord licensing scheme in parts of the borough between 2018 and 2023. Now, they are seeking to expand this into a borough-wide licensing policy. Former mayor Philip Glanville and mayoral adviser for private renting, Councillor Sem Moema, had pledged in 2022 to introduce the scheme within two years. Additionally, the council’s ‘Better Deal for Renters’ campaign last March reaffirmed the commitment to extend the licence scheme to as many wards as possible.

Legislative changes from the government last December have strengthened local authorities’ powers to introduce landlord licensing without requiring prior permission, removing a previous regulatory hurdle. This potentially paves the way for an accelerated rollout of Hackney’s borough-wide scheme.

While the scheme would in theory affect all private landlords within Hackney, the council is considering offering discounted fees to landlords whose properties meet certain criteria. These include certification by the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme and compliance with energy-efficiency standards. The proposals aim to strike a balance “between effective scheme administration with fairness to landlords,” according to a report authored by Hackney Mayor Caroline Woodley and Councillor Moema ahead of tonight’s cabinet meeting.

They stated, “By enabling the council to target specific problem areas, licensing can help to enforce the principles of the Renter’s Rights Bill, ensuring landlords meet their responsibilities and tenants live in safe, well-maintained homes.”

Pressure has also come from the borough’s Green opposition group, which has urged the cabinet to expedite the licensing scheme’s introduction, calling for its implementation no later than the beginning of October this year.

Hackney’s private rented sector has been growing steadily, increasing by 28 per cent since 2011, though this remains lower than the national increase, where the private rented sector has nearly doubled over the same period. The council’s forthcoming decision on the licensing scheme marks a significant step in addressing safety concerns within Hackney’s rental market.

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

## Bibliography

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3. <https://hackney.gov.uk/statistics-evidence-plans-and-strategies/> - This page offers insights into Hackney’s population and statistics, including data on housing, which relates to the challenges faced by the private rented sector.
4. <https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/housing-services/private-sector-housing/user_uploads/hds18122_private-sector-housing-strategy_v6.pdf> - This draft private sector housing strategy outlines the council’s plans to improve housing conditions, including extending licensing schemes to address safety concerns and disrepair.
5. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2023/no-renters-rights-bill-granted-royal-assent-but-regulatory-changes-made/> - This webpage discusses recent legislative changes that empower local authorities to implement landlord licensing without prior government approval, potentially easing Hackney's licensing rollout.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/renters-reform> - This government page outlines reform initiatives aimed at enhancing renters' rights, including safety and maintenance standards that align with Hackney’s proposed licensing scheme.
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