# Liverpool’s Welsh Streets residents protest Placefirst rent hikes amid housing crisis



Protests have erupted in Liverpool's Welsh Streets as residents and union representatives confront Placefirst, the private rental company responsible for housing in the area, over significant rent increases. This dispute has escalated after a group comprising local residents and members of the Acorn union accessed Placefirst's headquarters in Salford, seeking a dialogue with the company’s chief executive, David Mawson.

The Welsh Streets, located in Toxteth, hold a rich cultural history, notably as the childhood home of Beatles drummer Ringo Starr. Residents have recently voiced strong concerns regarding sudden rent hikes that many believe will render their homes unaffordable. According to feedback from the community, these increases have not only disrupted their financial stability but are also pushing long-standing tenants out of a neighbourhood they call home.

Placefirst has publicly stated that it is attentive to residents' concerns. However, residents argue that their voices are not being adequately heard. Many were reportedly blindsided when they discovered through media reports, specifically the Liverpool Echo, that the company intended to implement a new policy, ostensibly allowing for a cap on rent increases at 10%. "Far from being transparent with us, most of us only found out about this new 'policy' in the ECHO," remarked tenant Lee Brady, emphasising that prevailing rents in the Welsh Streets are already above market rates. He further expressed disbelief over Placefirst’s justification for its pricing, stating, "Placefirst have already admitted we haven't been receiving the quality of services they claim justify our high rents."

The protest at Placefirst's office was deemed necessary by residents and union members who believe that their requests for meetings with company officials have been overlooked. Martin Mawdsley, branch secretary of Acorn Liverpool, highlighted the ongoing frustrating dialogue, stating, "Placefirst need to recognise the severity of the situation they’ve created." He underscored that the union has consistently requested to have a representative present at meetings to ensure the tenants’ concerns are addressed adequately.

In response to the protest, Placefirst expressed disappointment over the situation, accusing protestors of trying to "harass and intimidate" their staff. The company asserted that it had security protocols in place and that staff were advised to leave the premises during the unannounced protest. A spokesperson added that the company currently maintains ongoing discussions with affected residents and has established a policy intended to ameliorate the impact of potential rent increases exceeding 10%.

Placefirst further clarified its operational model, indicating that it is not a housing association and thus not obligated to adhere to the same regulations as social housing providers. "We provide homes and services of a higher standard," the spokesperson explained, noting the higher costs associated with their operational model. The company also mentioned it had undertaken a substantial volume of maintenance work and encouraged residents to report any property issues via their 24/7 app and portal.

Additionally, Placefirst noted that it would be meeting privately with representatives, including Kim Johnson MP, in the near future, expressing hope for a constructive dialogue following the events of last week.

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

## Bibliography

* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-24286197> - This article discusses the derelict state of Liverpool's Welsh Streets, highlighting the challenges residents face due to the area's decline and the impact on their living conditions.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-40370673> - This piece covers the approval of a regeneration plan for the Welsh Streets, aiming to revitalize the area and address issues like rent increases and housing quality.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-24865596> - This report details the council's decision to implement compulsory purchase orders as part of a £15 million regeneration plan for the Welsh Streets, addressing housing concerns.
* <https://www.mcau.co.uk/project/welsh-streets-liverpool/> - This page outlines the transformation of the Welsh Streets, including the refurbishment of Victorian terraced houses and the creation of a vibrant community, aligning with the article's mention of Placefirst's involvement.
* <https://www.placefirst.co.uk/blog/2024/09/12/final-phase-completed-at-16340m-regeneration-of-welsh-streets/> - This announcement details the completion of the final phase of Placefirst's £42.8 million regeneration project in the Welsh Streets, providing context to the article's mention of Placefirst's efforts.
* <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/life-welsh-streets-liverpool-hundreds-22694689> - This article provides insights into the history and current state of the Welsh Streets, including their cultural significance and the challenges residents face, supporting the article's references to the area's heritage and housing issues.
* <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiowFBVV95cUxOM3Q3SkljSklCc2hBZ2JpeHl3Vk90Ml80VU1XZy1EN1NMNjFmQTRTOFFCOFV0ZkhuRTRGTmRLdGZvYzdRNExSelhYVnZsZklkMGpaRjJPZlRWODE0ME1XVTBOYnJzMkpYQkVPN0RuOFBuVDlvRmlxZDliTEt5UFJMSUpUX25QaWRvQlBGM1BpcnVhVVFZWkZFR29GRHN5RlJ0b3lJ0gGoAUFVX3lxTE5xOTZXdklnY3pnVmFRWTRvZ1RoLTBFbzFzMU5PTjBEdkdUSjZrczA3eUFuRy1RbHVKRGl1Q3pyNFBYN3pkUE03QWc2cTVXMkVraXBycXg3QldTUjdYbTJMdWZFVlRmeF94eXYwczJRc2tlc1dhTGtuby1TRk9ZNlFOVXV5R05uX3hqM3FpYU83TmRvNjNBVmlhNXZ5R3BnMy1vVzJPRmltOQ?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data