# Darlington residents battle surge of multi-tenant houses reshaping Greenbank Road



Residents of Greenbank Road in Darlington, County Durham, find themselves grappling with significant changes to their neighbourhood as a surge in property conversions into Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) transforms their once-close-knit community. Local families lament the decline of their area, characterised by charming 19th-century townhouses, now increasingly fragmented by landlords capitalising on regulatory loopholes to convert these homes into crammed bedsits.

Long-standing residents have raised alarms about the overcrowding and transient nature of these new living arrangements. Property developers are reportedly buying family homes at low prices, modifying them to accommodate up to nine tenants. Matt Fisher, a father of four who has lived on Greenbank Road for 15 years, expressed his despair over the changes, stating, "When we moved here, these were all family homes. Now, there’s only four left on that side of the road." He worries that his home’s value plummets with every newly converted HMO, compounding his fears of crime and disorder, with drug dealing becoming a regular sight on the street.

The ongoing transformations include the conversion of a single-family house into a nine-bed HMO, with developers benefitting significantly from the rentals likely to be set at £400 to £500 per tenant. This economic model, however, has raised concerns among existing residents about safety and community dynamics. One neighbour described the current situation as a "nightmare," having lived beside the same stable neighbours for decades, only to face the prospect of a constantly changing revolving door of new tenants.

The cumulative effects of these changes have prompted residents to take action. A petition has been launched, urging Darlington Borough Council to exercise greater control over HMO developments, particularly those involving six or fewer tenants, which currently do not require planning permission. The petition voices the community's frustration: "Darlington Borough Council has lost control of the HMO situation in our neighbourhood." Local authorities acknowledge the situation's complexity, with Darlington Council reportedly recognising that HMOs provide essential housing solutions but also that concentrations of unregulated HMOs can disrupt the social fabric of areas.

Echoing sentiments from Darlington, other councils across the country are grappling with the consequences of increased HMOs. For instance, Eastbourne Borough Council has approved new regulations to combat inadequate maintenance and rising anti-social behaviour linked to HMOs. Similarly, Councils in Gloucester and Derby are implementing stricter measures to limit new HMO conversions and address the social issues arising from them. Salford City Council has likewise reported that the high concentration of HMOs is affecting community cohesion, prompting them to develop plans to preserve the character of local neighbourhoods.

In a broader context, studies have indicated that the proliferation of HMOs can lead to environmental concerns, such as waste management and parking pressures, as highlighted by the National HMO Lobby. This growing body of evidence underscores the urgent need for regulatory measures across multiple regions to mitigate the negative impacts associated with HMOs.

As residents of Greenbank Road continue their fight against the changes in their community, they are reminded that their local environment is not only a matter of aesthetics but also of safety, stability, and the quality of life they wish to preserve for future generations.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14787169/We-lived-homes-years-neighbours-costing-thousands-race-family-standing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14787169/We-lived-homes-years-neighbours-costing-thousands-race-family-standing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp0845v2q1zo)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14787169/We-lived-homes-years-neighbours-costing-thousands-race-family-standing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgz570pqd6o), [[5]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/massive-concentrations-hmos-creating-problems-29252886)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14787169/We-lived-homes-years-neighbours-costing-thousands-race-family-standing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckg91g4944zo)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14787169/We-lived-homes-years-neighbours-costing-thousands-race-family-standing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmcomloc/50/50ii56.htm)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14787169/We-lived-homes-years-neighbours-costing-thousands-race-family-standing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c88n11jrv72o)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14787169/We-lived-homes-years-neighbours-costing-thousands-race-family-standing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp0845v2q1zo> - Eastbourne Borough Council has approved measures to address issues arising from the increasing number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the area. A study commissioned by the council highlighted problems such as inadequate property maintenance and a rise in anti-social behaviour linked to HMOs. The council plans to implement stricter regulations, including extending rules for new HMO applications and improving complaint monitoring systems, to mitigate these challenges and maintain community standards.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgz570pqd6o> - Gloucester City Council is seeking to reduce the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the city due to concerns over their impact on local communities. With nearly 500 HMOs, particularly in areas like Barton and Tredworth, issues such as waste management problems, parking congestion, and a weakened sense of community have been reported. The council is considering applying for additional powers to control the proliferation of new shared housing and address these challenges.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckg91g4944zo> - Derby City Council has approved stricter regulations on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in response to concerns about their 'excessive' presence in the city. The new rules require landlords to obtain planning permission to convert properties into HMOs accommodating up to six unrelated tenants, with larger HMOs already needing permission. The council aims to improve housing quality and prevent issues like anti-social behaviour, parking problems, and environmental concerns associated with high concentrations of HMOs.
5. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/massive-concentrations-hmos-creating-problems-29252886> - Salford City Council has identified significant problems arising from the high concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in certain neighbourhoods. A report found that the transformation of family homes into HMOs is impacting social cohesion and placing additional pressure on local services. The council has adopted a plan to limit new HMOs in specific areas to address these issues and preserve the character of local communities.
6. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmcomloc/50/50ii56.htm> - The National HMO Lobby has submitted written evidence to the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, highlighting the negative impacts of high concentrations of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) on neighbourhoods. Issues include anti-social behaviour, environmental problems like parking and litter, and economic challenges such as the decline of local services and community facilities. The evidence underscores the need for regulatory measures to manage HMO proliferation and protect community well-being.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c88n11jrv72o> - Reading Borough Council is considering implementing tighter controls on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) due to concerns over waste management issues. Thousands of properties in Reading have been converted into HMOs, leading to confusion about bin collection days and recycling practices. The council is exploring the introduction of discretionary HMO licence schemes to improve waste management and enhance the condition of neighbourhoods affected by HMOs.