



Private rented housing licensing

The social impact of private rented housing licensing in Nottingham



Nottingham
City Council

Homes fit for the future

Private rented licensing

Introduction

'Home' is an emotional and meaningful relationship between people and the property where they live, with long-standing evidence to show that the positive qualities of 'home' provide significant wellbeing effects, whilst their absence damages health and wellbeing.

The number of people living in privately rented homes has grown substantially over the last 20 years, with almost a third of Nottingham's residents now living in a privately rented home. Nottingham's vision for housing recognises how home is the foundation for people to thrive.

Private rented housing licensing therefore has a significant role to play in achieving the city's vision for housing. Nottingham has opted to have a licensing scheme that covers most privately rented homes in the city - the third biggest licensing scheme in England outside of London - because of evidence of the need to raise the standard of private rented homes, and thereby improve the lives of people living in these homes. The aim of licensing is to 'drive up standards of privately rented homes and protect renters across the city'.

The aim of this impact evaluation is to capture the wellbeing effect of licensing, on people living in privately rented homes, for those who own and manage them, and for wider neighbourhoods and the city of Nottingham. Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a well-established method for measuring the overall improvement to the wellbeing of individuals, communities, wider society and the environment. Whilst there is much evidence about the importance of housing in contributing to people and society's overall wellbeing, this is the first time SROI has been used to measure the impact of private rented housing licensing. The SROI assesses the impact of licensing over the last five years, from January 2020 - December 2024.

Nottingham's vision for housing:

'Homes in Nottingham meet the aspirations and needs of current and future residents. People live in safe, warm homes, that they can afford, in vibrant local neighbourhoods where everyone can thrive.'

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Private rented licensing

How does licensing work in Nottingham?

There are three types of housing licences in Nottingham, covering the majority of privately rented homes. Larger privately rented properties, known as Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), are covered by Mandatory and Additional Licensing. As the name suggests, Mandatory Licensing is a national requirement for properties shared by five or more households, whilst Additional Licensing was adopted as a local decision to ensure smaller HMOs (shared by three to five people) are covered by licensing. Similarly, Selective Licensing was locally adopted in Nottingham in order to bring smaller privately rented properties (with one household) within licensing.

Licensing applies in certain areas of the city, depending on evidence of need due to issues such as poor property conditions, significant and persistent problems caused by anti-social behaviour, or high levels of crime.

Landlords apply for a licence for each of their rented properties, which lasts for up to five years. The licence sets out a number of conditions that landlords are expected to meet. These cover legal compliance with housing law, minimum property standards, and expected management responsibilities. Landlords can go above and beyond the minimum standards of licensing, by becoming accredited to the Nottingham Rental Standard. Becoming accredited provides a quality mark for landlords, resulting in a lower licence fee.

Mandatory HMO Licensing

National scheme since 2006 which local councils must carry out.

Applies to private rented properties shared by **five or more people** from more than one household.



Additional HMO Licensing

First introduced in Nottingham in 2014 where the council has evidence of a need to improve standards of quality and safety.

Applies to private rented properties shared by **three or more people** from more than one household.



Selective Licensing

Introduced in certain parts of Nottingham in 2018 where the council has evidence of a need to improve standards of quality and safety.

Applies to private rented properties with **one household**.



Licence conditions

Legal compliance:

- ✓ **Fit and proper person:** Landlords are suitable and trustworthy, with no relevant previous convictions
- ✓ **Comply with housing law:** Landlords meet legal responsibilities to make sure rented homes are safe, habitable and managed correctly

Property standards:

- ✓ **Gas & electrical safety:** Records of safe installations
- ✓ **Fire & carbon monoxide safety:** Working detection and safe exit
- ✓ **Security:** Working locks on doors and windows
- ✓ **Warmth:** Can be kept reasonably warm e.g. heating, insulation
- ✓ **Overcrowding:** Enough space and amenities for occupants
- ✓ **State of repair:** Good state of repair internally and outside

Management responsibilities

- ✓ **Regular inspections:** Every 6 months, with 24 hours' notice
- ✓ **Deal with repairs:** Processes for reporting and responding in good time
- ✓ **Waste:** Have a Waste Management Plan in place
- ✓ **Anti-social behaviour:** Policy that sets out steps to address ASB by residents or visitors
- ✓ **Tenancy information:** Written Tenancy Agreement and information pack

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Private rented licensing

Enabling renters to thrive

Supporting the long-term vision for Nottingham

Impact of licensing

This Impact Map shows how the **activities** of licensing lead to direct **outcomes**, and long-term **impact**.

The core **activities** of licensing create a foundation of data and intelligence that supports the team in proactive and reactive management of licensed properties, as well as promoting good practice with landlords and working towards shared goals with local partners.

This leads to **outcomes** that are seen over the five-year period of the licensing scheme, demonstrating improvements in landlord standards, standards of homes and neighbourhoods, and empowering and supporting renters.

In the long-term this will have an **impact** on the quality of landlords, rented homes and neighbourhoods in Nottingham, ultimately enabling renters to thrive, and contributing to wider goals of the long-term vision for the city.



Homes fit for the future

Private rented licensing

The social impact of licensing

The social impact of licensing is assessed using the Social Return on Investment approach, which compares the cost of delivering a service with the value of the benefits that it generates, to those who experience them.

Licensing creates the biggest impact for renters, through ensuring **safer and warmer homes for renters**, that **enable renters to thrive**. The outcomes that drive this impact are as a result of inspection activities carried out by the licensing team – demonstrating that property inspections are licensing’s most powerful tool when it comes to identifying poor property standards, and improving renters’ wellbeing by ensuring they are remedied.

The next biggest impact is through **ensuring the quality of landlords**. The highest value created is through targeting unlicensed and unlawful landlords. Licensed landlords gain value through improved knowledge, standards and best practice, whilst recognising the administrative cost to landlords from the licence process.

Improving neighbourhoods creates wellbeing value for local residents living alongside privately rented properties, with licensing resources helping to identify and address poor external standards, waste and noise.

The improved outcomes achieved by licensing help **support the long-term vision for Nottingham**, and reduce the burden on other city partners.

Over five years, licensing activities cost **£24.9m** (funded from licence fees), and generated **£114.9m** in social value as a result of the outcomes achieved.

Safer and warmer homes for renters;
Enabling renters to thrive

Ensuring the quality of landlords

£10.5m



£4.1m
value of landlord knowledge, standards and best practice



-£0.5m
cost to landlords of administrative burden



£6.9m
value of enforcement vs. unlawful landlords

£91m



£11.8m
saved health, care and economic costs from avoided health hazards



£78.4m
wellbeing value to every renter living in properties improved through licensing



£0.8m
value for protecting and empowering vulnerable renters

Improving neighbourhoods

£7.8m



£5.9m
wellbeing value of improved external property conditions



£1.1m
wellbeing value reduced noise/ASB



£0.8m
wellbeing value of improved streets (problem waste)

Supporting the long-term vision for Nottingham
Reduced burden on city partners

£5.5m



£2.8m
value of avoided fires



£1.5m
value of estimated carbon reduction



£0.8m
savings to NHS



£0.3m
savings to police

Social Return on Investment

Every **£1** invested in **private rented housing licensing** generates **£4.62** in **social value**

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Private rented licensing

CASE STUDY

A day in the life of a licensing inspection officer

“I’m a Compliance Officer for the HMO licensing team, so I do three or four inspections a week. I like that I’ve got cases from start to finish, seeing the properties improved. Last year I supported landlords to make improvements to over 100 properties – and the average number of people in an HMO is five, so that’s improved the living standards of 500 people in a year.”

I’m given the addresses by our team, from the list of their priorities, such as larger HMOs that haven’t had an inspection in a while, or if they’ve received a complaint. I’ll have a look at their case before I go out, checking any previous inspections or previous conditions that have been put on the licence. I have a standard inspection form to complete for each room in the house.

Usually someone meets me there – the landlord or manager, or a resident will let me in. We usually start from the top of the house and work down! We go into every single room and check everything. The biggest risks are fire safety and falls (on stairs or between levels), that’s where more people get injured in houses. And in the kitchen, safety around cooking.

I talk with the landlord as I’m going, and they’ll be asking questions. If it’s over safety then there’s no leeway there. So, for example, if there’s no fire detection then I can’t leave the property until I know that’s safe. But if it’s about amenities or other things,

we allow them to raise their concerns and suggestions about how to address it, as well as being reasonable and flexible about how long it will take to get the work done.

The majority of HMOs are student houses, and they tend to be of a good standard because it’s a competitive market. Most landlords are civil, the experienced ones have been through inspections before and know what we are looking for. It’s unusual that there’s no work needed, but mainly it’s minor issues that can be fixed quite quickly.

The main thing is to make properties safe – but we don’t want to make people homeless, so we work with the landlord to come to a solution where it’s safe. We also talk to the landlords if they’ve got problems with tenants – we have the Tenancy Matters team, and they’re here to help you as well.

I like it if there’s a tenant there, because I can talk to them and say ‘look, tell me any issues you’ve had. Did you report that to the landlord?’.

I make sure I make it clear to the tenants, if they’ve got any issues and they’ve reported it to the landlord and not got a response, then contact the Council – especially if it’s anything to do with safety.

After the inspection I usually send the landlord my report, with a schedule of works that needs to be completed. Most of the time, I don’t need to go and reinspect, and the landlords send me evidence of the work that’s been done. I normally give landlords a short period, and if I haven’t heard anything then I’ll escalate it. If I say I’m coming to reinspect, often a lot of work will then get done.

Most respond before any more enforcement is needed. Some landlords will only do the works with the threat of enforcement action. Only the extreme cases where we say you’re not a fit and proper person to manage this property, we’re likely to reject your next application.

“Our inspections certainly improve safety, and I see landlords put the work in to make properties suitable and to the quality we expect. And we also see good quality properties and encourage those landlords with positive feedback.”

Homes fit for the future

Private rented licensing

Improving landlord standards

Engaging with the licensing process means that landlords are made aware of the relevant housing law, minimum property standards and required management practices in order to be a licensed landlord. In addition, a licensing requirement is that landlords undertake relevant training on the law and legal requirements relating to managing privately rented housing every three years. This is improving landlord knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as a landlord, and providing safe and well-managed properties.

Softer approaches to improving landlord standards such as improving landlord knowledge are also backed up by the more formal requirements of licensing standards, enforced through compliance activities (inspections, audits and enforcement). This provides a clearly defined standard for landlords, so that licensing is ensuring landlord standards meet at least the minimum requirements of licensing, but also encouraging landlords to improve on this – for example by encouraging and incentivising accreditation to the quality mark of the Nottingham Rental Standard. Licensing therefore also encourages landlords to improve and achieve best practice standards.

At the other end of the scale, the licensing team have specific resources to proactively seek out unlicensed landlords, to either bring them within the licensing scheme (further supporting raising landlord standards) or in more extreme situations where landlords fail to comply with licensing or there is evidence of unlawful practice, to penalise unlawful or criminal landlords. As well as improving landlord standards, this also contributes to supporting and empowering renters by identifying landlords that are breaking housing law.

Improving landlord standards

Improving landlord knowledge

36%

Landlords say their knowledge about the **rights and responsibilities** of a landlord have improved

Ensuring landlord standards

31%

Landlords report they have **made improvements** to their property(s) or tenancy management due to licensing

Supporting best practice

35%

Licences issued to **accredited landlords**, compared to 6% landlords accredited nationally

Penalising unlawful landlords

7,443

Unlicensed landlords **brought within licensing**, 72 civil penalty notices and four prosecutions

Licensing proactive management



8,600

Licence audits, 50% non-compliant



30,600

Property inspections, 11,000 issues identified



19,000

Investigations of unlicensed/unlawful landlords



48%

Landlords completed relevant training



60%

Landlords accessed information resources



34%

Landlords are accredited

Survey data from 816 landlords

About landlords and agents



16,400

Licence holders



35,000

Licensed homes



70%

Have only one licence

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Private rented licensing

CASE STUDY

Improving standards of homes through licensing inspections

“I’m a Compliance Officer within the Selective Licensing team, which involves carrying out inspections of licensed properties. It’s a lot of conversations with landlords – it starts with notifying them of the issues and educating them around the requirements, and then asking them to take the necessary action to remedy the issues, and if necessary, taking enforcement action.”

Last autumn I inspected a property that was a two-storey terrace built in the 1940s, which was only a two-bedroom property, and a family of five living there – mum, dad and three boys. The three boys were living in the front bedroom. It felt quite crowded and cramped, with three teenage boys. There was a considerable amount of damp and mould in the property as well – the smell of damp was quite evident as soon as I came in.

It was in every room. In the living room it was around the windows and behind the sofa, and a bit crawling up the walls. It was worse in the bedrooms, most of all in the front bedroom with the three boys sleeping in. I was quite shocked how bad it was – it looked like someone had taken a pepper grinder and really heavily coated the wall. At the head of the bunk bed it was just black for a couple of feet up the wall, and then more mould on the walls and ceiling.

During the inspection I also found that there was no fire detection – which is an immediate safety concern.

I emailed the landlord to say that they needed to put the fire detection in ASAP, but I got no response. I contacted the tenant, and they said that the landlord had been in touch after the inspection and let them know they needed to find somewhere else to live, so they were at risk of being evicted. Because he was not engaging with us to deal with any of the issues we’d drawn his attention to, we served an Improvement Notice – this means that the landlord is not able to legally evict tenants for six months, to prevent retaliatory evictions when a tenant complains of poor conditions.

I was in contact with the tenants throughout, telling them that the eviction notices weren’t valid. The woman living in the property had mobility issues, so she spent a lot of time in bed, exposed to the mould. They had raised the issue with the landlord, but communication with the landlord wasn’t great and he hadn’t responded. They were not keen on kicking up too much of a fuss, so there wasn’t a lot they could do. I later issued a Civil Penalty Notice for the breach of licence conditions due to lack of fire detection.

The Improvement Notice meant that the work has now been done to improve the property. I reinspected the property three months later, and it was in great condition. They’ve done a really good job treating the mould, and the walls were looking in good condition. There was no sign of a leak, it was just caused by so many people living in the property and lack of ventilation – so the antifungal cleaning agent had been effective.

They’d put the worktops and cupboard doors in the kitchen that I’d asked for, and fitted smoke alarms that were mains-wired and interlinked, which is the gold standard for that kind of property.

They’d addressed all the issues, and the tenants were quite happy with the works that have been done. The stress and unpleasantness of having to live with the smell and sight of the mould had been removed, as well as the worry about the effect of it on their health.



That’s what I really like about the job. You can see immediately the benefits that people are getting from it. I get to see that change there and then – and hearing from the renters themselves or seeing it, I know that’s going to make sure that person’s not going to get sick because of the damp and mould.



Homes fit for the future

Private rented licensing

Improving standards of homes

The primary aim of licensing is to drive up the standards of privately rented homes. Licensing standards reflect the legal requirements for rented homes to be safe, habitable and legally compliant - but having a licensing scheme in place means that there are resources to ensure that these standards are being met. Licensing identifies which homes are privately rented, then requires evidence that these properties are up to standards, and verifies this through inspections and other routes for checking compliance.

This is important because access to safe, secure and good-quality housing is fundamental to people's wellbeing. Research consistently shows that the physical condition of a home directly influences people's health outcomes, life satisfaction and social relationships.

Having a home that is able to be kept warm is the top priority for renters, as living in a cold home has significant negative health and wellbeing effects. The state of repair inside their home is another top priority for renters. Licensing ensures homes are able to be kept warm and made safe, reducing hazards to health. This supports renters to be healthy and safe in their home, reducing treatment costs to the NHS. The licensing team work in partnership to provide safe homes, by carrying out fire safety checks and working alongside Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service. Licensing activities support more secure homes, identifying security risks.

Licensing inspections are the most powerful tool for directly improving standards of homes. However, evidence from landlords shows that having licensing in place supports a wider uplift in property standards. Every home that is improved benefits the health and wellbeing of each person living in that home.



Licensing reactive management



5,000
Homes improved after inspection



780
Significant health hazards remedied



9,000
Fire safety checks carried out



About private renters



89,000
Renters in licensed homes



1 in 4
Renters live in HMOs



47%
Rate their property standards as high



2 out of 3
Renters aware of licensing

Homes fit for the future

Private rented licensing

CASE STUDY Working in partnership to tackle anti-social behaviour

The ASB team within licensing work closely with Neighbourhood Safety Officers (NSOs) and representatives from both universities, to resolve issues with noise and other ASB as quickly as possible. The partners address the issue from both sides, contacting both the landlord and the residents to raise and address the complaints. This partnership has been effective at tackling the issue at first intervention, and reducing the number of complaints over time.

The Regulatory Compliance Officer for ASB in the licensing team explains:

“We work in partnership with the Neighbourhood Safety Officers (NSOs), as well the universities and police. Where there is a complaint of ASB made to the Council, the NSOs will visit the reported property and speak to the occupants about the reports they’ve received and have the power to take enforcement action if appropriate.

Our team is unique as we’re the only team that has the ability to go to the licence holder and challenge them directly about their occupant’s behaviour. This, alongside interactions with universities, police and NSOs, provides a more holistic approach to tackling ASB.”

The Community Engagement team at University of Nottingham says:

“We work with students living out in the community in Nottingham, engaging with students to advise and support them, and also manage any issues that arise.

We aim to work in partnership - with NSOs, police and NCC licensing - as working together has more of an impact when attempting to change behaviours. NSOs and the University can work with students and take enforcement action if necessary, whilst licensing holds the landlord accountable.

We’ve had some examples of where we’ve had ongoing issues with a particular property having regular parties, and noise complaints. Once our investigation process has completed, licensing can then step in to hold the landlords to account so that we have clear and consistent behaviour expectations from all sides.”

The Neighbourhood Safety Officers find:

“In student areas with high concentration of HMOs, we tend to see issues from waste, to noise and other anti-social behaviour. Now we directly link into NCC licensing regarding any noise incidents that come to us, and they also raise any complaints they’ve received with us.

Licensing is a real help from a multi-faceted approach – we talk to residents, and licensing raise it with landlords so that there’s more pressure on residents to abide by their tenancy conditions. Because licence conditions are in place, we often find the response is a lot quicker.”

“Without licensing there would be a void in tackling issues around ASB and noise, particularly the most difficult cases. Universities can use our powers around student behaviour to escalate to a certain level, but having the licensing team step in and hold landlords accountable is really valuable. University of Nottingham Community Engagement Team

Homes fit for the future

Private rented licensing

Improving neighbourhoods

The quality of the local neighbourhood has an effect on residents' wellbeing, including private renters themselves as well as other local residents. Problems with litter, rubbish or waste, scruffy gardens, neglected buildings or poor external conditions of buildings have been identified as having a negative impact on people's wellbeing.

Licensing works to improve external property standards through inspections and partnership working, with Neighbourhood Safety Officers (NSOs) reporting any issues with external property standards to the licensing team. Evidence from partners and licensing officers suggests that external conditions of properties have been improved over time, as the worst properties are remedied and landlords became more aware of the requirements of licensing in relation to external property standards.

Licensing has made specific changes over this period to strengthen their powers to tackle problem waste and enforce this through partnership working. All licensed properties now have to have a Waste Management Plan, and licensing officers work with NSOs and Waste crews to tackle problem areas. Inspection data shows an improvement in the number of properties with problem waste over this time, and complaints about waste have also reduced over time.

Complaints about anti-social behavior (ASB) are most prevalent in HMO properties. Licensing has worked closely with NSOs and the Universities to tackle the issue from both sides, contacting both landlords and residents about the issue. ASB complaints have decreased over the last five years.



Partnership working



About neighbourhoods

8,000 households of other tenures live in areas that are majority privately rented homes



Areas with most private rented homes:
Hyson Green & Arboretum
Castle
Lenton & Wollaton East
Radford

Homes fit for the future

Private rented licensing

CASE STUDY Identifying and referring safeguarding issues

“I’m a Regulatory Compliance Officer within the licensing team. I believe there can be a slight misconception that licensing is just about licence conditions, as there’s a lot more that goes into the information sharing between teams when it comes to recognition of safeguarding concerns, spotting indicators of radicalisation, all forms of abuse and vulnerabilities, all the way through to knowing which teams to go to for exploitation or Modern Slavery concerns. Within the team, we all discuss, share, collaborate and encourage each other so we’re all constantly learning from each other and our experiences.”

For example, during a routine HMO compliance inspection I met a vulnerable lady with limited mobility and a language barrier. Going into the property I noticed that there were quite a few hazards relating to significant hoarding. There were potential fire risks with large items obstructing a protected escape route, and a live extension cable leading into the bathroom. This was due to a lack of understanding, with a vulnerable tenant who didn’t understand the safety issues, and the landlord stated that they were not aware that this was happening.

So, it made our visit even more important for us to be there and see that. I had to make several referrals. It was a good success – the referral went to the Hoarding Panel and Adult Safeguarding for them to respond to, the Fire Service went to do a welfare check, and the landlord was very proactive and got involved to remove the hazards.

During another inspection I discovered that there was a family of three living in one bedroom of an HMO, the youngest being a child under five years old. The mother was expecting another baby in the next few months. The licence conditions for this HMO stipulated one person per room, so to see that there were three people within that room raised a few concerns, as well as other issues such as a considerable amount of damp and mould in their washroom where they all washed as a family.

I got all the information I could from the family and permission from them to make a referral. There was lots of collaboration with their support worker and other agencies. The landlord was quite eager to work with us to ensure they were compliant with their licence conditions. The landlord had the damp and mould fixed within a fortnight. Shortly after, the family managed to move to a more suitable accommodation for them that would meet their needs.

In another case, information was shared with us by other stakeholders, about an unlicensed HMO above a commercial premises - there were reports of people sleeping on mattresses and working in the premises below, and concerns regarding Modern-Day Slavery or exploitation and immigration. Other stakeholders were keen to make inquiries relating to their own investigations and to assist us with our evidence gathering.

With entry powers under the Housing Act, we were able to obtain a warrant to enter the premises. There was no fire detection in the entire building upstairs and the escape routes were not clear or secure. We served an emergency prohibition order to inform them of the works needed to rectify the issue, thus making it safely habitable for the occupants. These were rectified in a matter of days. All the services were able to work in tandem in order to make it a safer place.

“ While we do deal with licensing – for example, that window doesn’t lock or there’s damp and mould – because we’re out on the ground, we get to see every type of living situation and it’s important for us to be able to pick up on things that might end up resolving situations and making it a safer place for everybody. That’s job satisfaction. ”

Homes fit for the future

Private rented licensing

Supporting and empowering renters

Licensing provides a backstop for people living in privately rented homes to ensure they are supported and empowered in their rights as renters.

The Tenancy Matters team provide formal support for renters and landlords in relation to housing and tenancy law. Informing and updating landlords on tenancy rights, including the changes due under the Renters' Rights Act, also helps ensure best practice.

Licensing officers are trained to identify signs of safeguarding issues, vulnerabilities and abuse, exploitation or Modern-Day Slavery, and signs of radicalisation. Through the powers of entry under the Housing Act, licensing officers are able to see 'behind the door' and share evidence with relevant agencies to help improve the long-term wellbeing of residents. This includes both official referrals and working in partnership with others to resolve issues identified during inspections or licensing visits.

The licensing team check that the number of people living in a property is compliant with licence conditions, and that there is adequate space and amenities for everyone living there. Licensing officers investigate concerns or complaints about overcrowding, and in cases where there is significant risk of harm, require changes to be made by the landlord. Licensing also works with NCC's Planning department to ensure communities don't become overcrowded, by checking HMO conversions have required planning permission.

The resources and expertise that the licensing team can bring to these situations helps empower renters' rights. This includes ultimately penalising unlawful or criminal landlords so that renters are protected.

Supporting and empowering renters



26
cases of significant overcrowding identified



28
cases of significant safeguarding issues referred



743
renters supported by Tenancy Matters

Promoting good practice



5,000

landlords receive licensing newsletter



445

landlords supported by Tenancy Matters



72

landlords penalised for failure to licence



Repairs

Dealing with repairs promptly is renters' top tenancy priority



25%

renters give low rating for tenancy management



73%

Think licensing makes a difference to the quality of homes & landlords

Survey data from 316 renters

Renters' rights



52%

landlords directly manage their own property(s)



33%

landlords say licensing improved their awareness of best practice



46%

renters likely to report a problem with their home/landlord to the Council

Homes fit for the future

Private rented licensing

CASE STUDY

Improving fire safety in tall residential buildings

The tragedy at Grenfell tower brought to national attention the issue of fire safety in tall buildings, and in Nottingham sparked the creation of a joint programme of action between Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) and Nottingham City Council. The Joint Audit and Inspection Team (JAIT) brings together Fire Safety Officers and NCC licensing officers, to target high-risk residential buildings - tall buildings and those with lots of residents - to inspect and ensure buildings are made safe.

JAIT have inspected 167 buildings over the last five years, and the current joint action programme will focus on a further 120 high-risk buildings over the next two years. The team carry out joint inspections, meaning that they can check for fire safety issues and ensure the wider licence conditions are met, such as internal standards inside individual flats. Working together makes best use of the resources and legislative powers of the two organisations and reduces the number of inspections for landlords and building owners/managers.

The JAIT programme focuses on buildings with unsafe cladding and other fire safety defects and seeks improvements using the powers of the Housing Act 2004, including Housing Licensing, and Fire Safety law to make sure the appropriate remedial action is undertaken to improve building safety. In many cases, using licence conditions around fire safety can produce quicker resolutions than using regulatory powers.

The lead for the JAIT team from within licensing explains: "With fire safety, we're looking at the chance of a fire breaking out, but also the chance of an uncontrollable spread of that fire. We carry out joint inspections with NFRS and determine the fire safety issues in each building based on what we have seen, what's lacking, what deficiencies there are. We'll usually serve an informal letter before action if it's the first time we've been involved, then move on to more formal enforcement if no progress is made.

Sometimes the larger remedial works such as cladding replacement can take a long time to complete, as they require planning permission, funding applications and the actual building works. Other substantial issues like lack of fire doors, or failed compartmentation (measures to stop fires spreading between dwellings), or faults in fire detection or alarms can present significant risks to occupants.

Using licensing conditions we can often get these issues resolved more quickly, which makes the building safer sooner.

Due to the size of these buildings and their occupancy levels, the number of people that are affected can be substantial – so every time you make something safer, you know it's not just one occupant but many people that we're making safer. If there were to be a fire, it could end in tragedy – but we've made interventions that have reduced the risk of that happening."

The lead for the JAIT team from the NFRS says: "JAIT is a powerful example of how effective partnership working delivers real and lasting benefits for community safety. By bringing together fire protection, housing and regulatory expertise, the team provides a joined-up approach to assessing risk and compliance, ensuring that buildings are safer for residents, the wider public and responding firefighters. Through the dual application of the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, JAIT offers a comprehensive and consistent assessment of building standards, fire precautions and management arrangements."

This integrated approach avoids duplication, strengthens enforcement where required, and supports duty holders in achieving sustainable compliance. Most importantly, it enables us to identify and reduce risk earlier, protect vulnerable occupants, and improve firefighter safety by ensuring buildings are better understood and safer to operate in. (NFRS)

Homes fit for the future

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Maximising the future impact of licensing

This evaluation looks beyond a narrow assessment of licensing in terms of cost or regulatory function, to demonstrate how the full range of activities of licensing positively impact the wellbeing of renters, landlords, neighbourhoods and a city where people can thrive.

Several lessons emerge for the future. Firstly, the value generated is closely linked to the comprehensive coverage of licensing, and the resources dedicated to finding and remedying where licence conditions are not being met. Without the resources to staff and enforce this, impact would be limited. Continuing to refine approaches to target renters at highest risk in properties that don't meet licence standards will achieve the biggest impact.

Secondly, inspection and intelligence functions are particularly powerful levers for change. Direct property inspections drive measurable improvements in safety and quality of homes. Ensuring standards for warmth and standard of repair are being met through licensing will have a tangible impact on renters.

Thirdly, licensing works best as part of an integrated approach that combines regulatory powers with engagement, support and partnership working. Further strengthening landlord training and accreditation, and enhancing and growing effective operational partnerships provide opportunities for further impact.

The evidence shows that private rented housing licensing in Nottingham is generating measurable and substantial social value. The challenge for the next phase is to build on these foundations to ensure the benefits of licensing continue to outweigh its costs, and further enable renters - and the city as a whole - to thrive.

[The licensing officer] visited, I talked through my heating issues. I've been dealing with landlord agent for over two years without resolution. He contacted the landlord directly for me, the issue was resolved within a few weeks.
Renter



£91m

Safer and warmer homes, enabling renters to thrive

Licensing has helped me improve how I care for my properties. I've made my management more organised and fair for everyone. It's made things smoother, safer, and more respectful overall.
Landlord



£10.5m

Ensuring the quality of landlords

Collaborative efforts have led to noticeable improvements in how waste is presented in neighbourhoods.
Neighbourhood Safety Officer



£7.8m

Improving neighbourhoods

By bringing together fire protection, housing licensing - this avoids duplication, strengthens enforcement. Most importantly, it enables us to identify and reduce risk earlier.
Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service



£5.5m

Reducing burden on city partners

Total cost of licensing

£24.9m

Total social value of licensing

£114.9m

Every £1 invested in private rented licensing generates

£4.62 social value