

The following is an extract from the Private Rental Sector Strategy 2021-26 in respect of the action identified to consult on a proposed Additional Licensing scheme. The full strategy can be viewed on the Council website [Private Rental Sector Strategy for Portsmouth 2021- 2026](#)

The two top priorities for action from the consultation are:

- **Unlicensed HMOs:** Continue to deal proactively when an unlicensed HMO is reported (88% said very high or high priority).
- **Professional standards of regulation:** Ensure that officers responsible for regulating the PRS are trained to a professional standard and capable of meeting the needs of the strategy (84% said very high or high priority).

These actions will be given precedence and although they are not time limited it is proposed that an informal quarterly report and a formal annual report is made available so that progress can be monitored. The remaining actions achieved a very high or high average priority score in the consultation and have been grouped under headings. Full list of actions below in order of priority:

- **HMOs:** Continue to deal proactively when an unlicensed HMO is reported.
- **Professional standards of regulation:** Ensure that officers responsible for regulating the PRS are trained to a professional standard and capable of meeting the needs of this strategy.
- **Communication/information:** Provide more information for tenants, such as average market rents across property sizes. Expand on the current website information on what makes a good tenant (including different situations). Investigate with third party stakeholders the feasibility for closer partnership working on a single communications and web strategy.
- **Governance:** Develop the current HMO governance board into a multi-agency partnership group which oversees this strategy. Review the stakeholders to ensure that all voices are covered.
- **Financial support:** Undertake a pilot of the rent deposit and bond scheme.
- **Shared services:** Work more closely with stakeholders to increase the understanding of the services that could be provided across Portsmouth to support the PRS.
- **Council internal processes:** Implement the revised supplementary planning document for HMOs. Review all relevant enforcement policies to make them more transparent. Work with other local authorities to find new ideas to support the PRS. Ensure that data sharing, both within the council and with external partners is maximised, within legislation.

- **Pilots:** Working with stakeholders, approach the DLUHC to look for support in the development and implementation of this strategy, with a particular request to pilot some of the changes identified below.

Further actions require additional investigation and resources. Officers will be required to bring further, more detailed, reports to councillors for approval before any can be permanently implemented. These will outline costs, timescales, risks, impacts and an operational delivery plan.

These actions have been reviewed in light of the response to the consultation and have been grouped and are set out in order of priority below. The highest scoring actions are workshops (76%) and a mediation service (72%). The overarching aim is that all agreed actions within the final strategy will be completed within the five year period. Progress of this will be monitored by the Cabinet Member for Housing & Preventing Homelessness.

1. **Workshops:**

- a. Work with landlord groups to provide workshops on how to be a good landlord (e.g. how to choose appropriate tenants and carrying out their own HHSRS assessment on their property).
- b. Work with tenancy groups to provide workshops on how to be a good tenant, aimed at helping a tenant to maintain a tenancy. Focussing on money management, behaviour and how to work with the landlord.

2. **Mediation:** Create a mediation service between landlords and tenants to help improve security of tenure. This may include a 'private sector housing court'.

3. **Financial support for the PRS:** Provide loans for good, accredited landlords to improve the quality of their property. Provide low interest loans for those who are eligible to be able to access the PRS (the loan will cover the rent deposit and any additional fees required to be paid to enter the PRS). Provide bonds to help those who are eligible to gain access to the PRS.

4. **Accreditation:**

- c. Expand the Rent it Right model to help more tenants across the PRS.
- d. Working with multi agency partners, develop the council's accreditation scheme to offer benefits to good landlords

5. **Additional licencing:** Consult on reintroducing additional licencing for HMOs to help in the better management of them and understand how they interact with the local community

This strategy presents an ambitious opportunity for Portsmouth to make real improvement in the lives of many that call it home, but don't have the security offered in the owner occupier or social rented sectors. By making it a housing solution for the short and long term it can have great benefits for the whole city.