

Press release: Crackdown on private landlords renting overcrowded and dangerous homes

Measures to improve overcrowded and dangerous living conditions of private tenants in shared homes were laid before Parliament today (15 March 2018) by Housing Minister Heather Wheeler.

Councils are being given tough new powers to tackle the small minority of rogue landlords who rent out overcrowded properties and impose fines of up to £30,000 for those landlords who do not comply.

From October councils will be able to set minimum bedroom size standards and also introduce limits on how many people can live in each bedroom of a licenced multiple occupancy home. Councils will be able to use national minimum standards or apply even tougher requirements in order to address specific local needs.

This move will help ensure tenants have the space they need and deserve as well as reduce health and safety risks they face by sharing cooking and washing facilities with too many people.

The new standards will apply to all landlords seeking new licences. Landlords of existing properties will be given up to 18 months to make necessary changes when re-applying for a licence when it expires.

In a move to stop rubbish piling up outside some shared rented homes, often presenting health risks and blighting neighbourhoods, landlords will also be required to provide adequate waste storage facilities in line with their local authority's rules. If they fail to do so they could face a fine.

These latest measures build on wider government action to drive up standards in the private rented sector by tackling bad landlords. This includes the launch of a new database of rogue landlords and introduction of banning orders for the worst offenders coming into force next month.

Minister Heather Wheeler said:

Everyone deserves a decent and safe place to live. But some tenants are being exploited by a minority of unscrupulous landlords who profit from renting out cramped and sometimes squalid or dangerous properties.

Today's measures will mean landlords must provide adequate space for their tenants or face a hefty fine. It is part of a raft of new powers for councils to crack down on rogue landlords and comprehensive action we are taking to improve conditions for private tenants.

Last month new legislation was introduced requiring more landlords to obtain a licence from their council. Landlords of 1 and 2-storey multiple occupancy properties will be brought within scope of mandatory licensing requirements across England, affecting roughly 160,000 additional properties.

Further information

Minimum space requirements

- Rooms used for sleeping by 1 person over 10 will have to be no smaller than 6.51 square metres, and those slept in by 2 people over 10 will have to be no smaller than 10.22 square metres. Rooms slept in by children of 10 years and younger will have to be no smaller than 4.64 square metres.
- The licence must specify the maximum number of persons (if any) who may occupy any room and the total number across the different rooms must be the same as the number of persons for whom the property is suitable to live in.

Extended scope of mandatory house in multiple occupation licensing

- National mandatory licensing currently only applies to houses in multiple occupation that have 3 or more storeys and occupied by 5 or more people. It is being extended to cover one/two storey houses in multiple occupation which are occupied by 5 or more people.

Waste Storage

- The government has re-affirmed the need for councils to provide comprehensive and frequent household waste collections which are free at the point of use. Councils should not seek to impose backdoor waste charging of residential properties, including houses in multiple occupation.

Banning orders and landlord database

A small number of rogue or criminal landlords knowingly rent out unsafe and substandard accommodation.

The [Housing and Planning Act 2016](#) introduced a range of measures to tackle rogue landlords:

- civil penalties of up to £30,000 as an alternative to prosecution – came into force April 2017
- extension of Rent Repayment Orders to cover illegal eviction, breach of a banning order or failure to comply with a statutory notice – came into force April 2017
- banning orders for the most serious offenders – to be implemented in April 2018
- a database of rogue landlords/letting property agents convicted of certain offences – to be implemented in April 2018

Office address and general enquiries

2 Marsham Street

London
SW1P 4DF

Contact form

<http://forms.communiti...>

General enquiries: please use this number if you are a member of the public
030 3444 0000

Media enquiries

Email

newsdesk@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Please use this number if you're a journalist wishing to speak to Press
Office
0303 444 1209

Social media – MHCLG

Twitter – <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

Flickr – <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mhclg>

LinkedIn – <http://www.linkedin.com/company/mhclg>

[News story: UK aid provides healthcare and education to Palestinian refugees](#)

The UK is supporting the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) to help educate 500,000 children and provide health services for 3 million Palestinian refugees, including those affected by the brutal conflict in Syria.

Speaking at the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference on UNRWA in Rome today (Thursday 15 March), Middle East Minister Alistair Burt highlighted the UK's continuing commitment to supporting Palestinian refugees and called on other countries to do more to alleviate some of the current pressures the agency is facing. He welcomed reform efforts to date and encouraged UNRWA to continue

the pace of cost-efficiency reform.

Mr. Burt confirmed that the UK will deliver its next round of financial support earlier than originally planned, to help meet the growing needs of Palestinian refugees across the region.

Minister Burt said:

The UK is unequivocally committed to supporting vulnerable Palestinian refugees by assisting in the provision of education and healthcare across the region which is a key part of our resolve to promote a two-state solution. UNRWA plays a unique and critical role in supporting regional stability, and it's absolutely right that Global Britain supports the sustainability of its services.

Today I'm calling on others to follow our lead to make sure that UNRWA's humanitarian and stabilising role continues uninterrupted. This is not just important for those Palestinians in need of aid, but also to maintain stability across the region which is in all of our interests.

Notes to Editors

- Over the course of the 2017/2018 financial year, the UK has provided around £50 million to UNRWA to support the agency's delivery of food, education and healthcare to vulnerable Palestinians across the Middle East. This makes us one of the top five donors.
- The UK will provide at least £28 million to UNRWA next financial year, as previously outlined in our multi-year commitment to 2021.

[Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Iran in April 2018](#)

Mr Rob Macaire CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran in succession to Mr Nicholas Hopton who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Macaire will take up his appointment in April 2018.

Commenting on the appointment, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Iran has an important role to play in the Middle East region, but it is essential that it does so in a constructive way – something I made clear during my visit to Tehran in December last year. The Iran deal, signed in 2015, was a huge diplomatic success. The

product of years of patient and persistent diplomacy that extinguished the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran.

In that vein, I am pleased that Rob will be applying his wealth of international experience to the leading HMG's engagement in Tehran. We face challenges – including the ongoing cases of British dual-nationals detained in Iran – and areas for potential collaboration. I look forward to working with him across these areas.

Mr Macaire said:

I am honoured to be appointed the new British Ambassador to Iran. The UK's continued engagement with Iran is vital to our goal of making the Middle East region a safer and more stable place. I look forward to working with the Government of Iran and with international partners to preserve the nuclear deal and deepen our bilateral relationship, through constructive engagement on human rights, trade, and seeking political solutions to the conflicts in Yemen, Syria and elsewhere.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Robert Macaire CMG

Married to: Alice Macaire

Children: Two

2016 – present Language Training

2011 – 2016 BG Group plc. Director of Government/Public Affairs and Political Risk

2008 – 2011 Nairobi, British High Commissioner

2006 – 2008 FC0, Director, Consular Services

2004 – 2006 New Delhi, Political Counsellor

2002 – 2004 FC0, Head, Counter Terrorism Policy Department

1998 – 2002 Washington, First Secretary, Middle East and Counter-terrorism

1998 FC0, Head of Sierra Leone Unit, Africa Directorate

1997 –1998 FC0, Head of Southern Africa Section, Africa Directorate

1996 – 1997 FC0, Head of MEPP Section, Near East and North Africa Department

1995 – 1996 FC0, Head of Levant Section, Near East and North Africa Department

1991 – 1995 Bucharest, Second Secretary (Know How Fund)

1990 FCO, Falkland Islands Department

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk

020 7008 3100

[News story: Consultation into strengthening teacher-examiner safeguards](#)

Ofqual has today (14 March 2018) set out how it intends to strengthen its regulation of awarding organisations' involvement of teachers in the development of confidential assessment materials. Today's [consultation](#) reflects detailed analysis of existing processes and extensive discussions with awarding organisations, examiners, teachers, students and parents. The new regime, if confirmed, will extend to all regulated qualifications.

The proposals include:

- explicitly setting out in our rules steps awarding organisations must take to help protect the integrity of the assessments to which teachers have contributed; and
- publishing further statutory guidance to help awarding organisations understand the

factors and approaches they should consider when deciding how to comply with the rules.

Consistent with these proposals, teachers will continue to be able to write assessments and have access to confidential materials. However, awarding organisations must maintain up to date records of all conflicts of interest relating to teachers who have seen confidential assessment materials. And they must review their safeguards such that they are appropriate and proportionate to:

- effectively mitigate the risks of using teachers in the development of assessment materials, for example by making sure no teacher knows whether or when any assessments they have developed will be used;
- support teachers to do the right thing, through appropriate training and contractual obligations;
- detect malpractice, for example by sampling the work of teachers who have written exam papers to look for any unusual patterns of response.

We are also stressing that the way in which awarding organisations have regard to our guidance will be taken into account when deciding on the nature and scale of any regulatory action should a breach of confidentiality occur.

Timing

The exam boards who deliver GCSEs, AS and A levels and other qualifications used as equivalents, such as the Pre-U have already written the exams for summer 2018.

Safeguards for 2018 will, therefore, need to focus on deterring and detecting malpractice

and on supporting teachers. These awarding organisations have published a joint statement setting out their intentions for this summer.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, and where necessary, we expect that all

awarding organisations will have made significant progress in terms of the safeguards they

employ by summer 2019, and have fully revised their approaches by 2020. This transition

period is necessary to avoid introducing an unacceptable degree of risk to the delivery of safe qualifications.

Sally Collier said:

“Almost universally, respondents to our call for evidence emphasised the importance of retaining a strong link between teaching and examining, and the benefit it brings to assessment design. Our rules on confidentiality and malpractice are already demanding.

The proposals we have put forward today build on them and provide greater clarity about our expectations and the implications for awarding organisations if information about an assessment is disclosed by a teacher who has been involved in its development. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the challenge of maintaining confidentiality. However, the events of summer 2017 showed how public confidence in assessments and, in turn, qualifications, can be damaged if confidential information is wrongly used. It is essential that those who take or otherwise rely on qualifications have upmost confidence in the outcomes.”

Background

- In September 2017 we announced we would review:
- the risks and benefits of the long-established practice whereby some teachers who write or contribute to exam papers also teach the qualification; and
- the effectiveness of the safeguards used to reduce the risk of a teacher who has this dual role disclosing or otherwise misusing information about confidential assessments.

We are publishing a suite of research and analysis today that provides context and support to our consultation proposals.

They include:

- a summary of our call for evidence into the benefits and risks of teachers being involved in the development of qualifications that they teach
- interviews with teacher-examiners about the risks and benefits of their involvement in developing assessment materials
- a review of safeguards used to prevent disclosure of confidential material in countries outside England
- a review of safeguards used to prevent disclosure of confidential material in countries

outside England

- interviews with students studying for AS/A levels, and parents of secondary school aged children, to understand their views on teacher involvement in writing exams
- research into the sources of, and ways of identifying anomalous responses in test scores.

ENDS

[Press release: Highways England wants to hear your views](#)

The organisation is using the mobile visitor centre for the second year following 2017's successful trial to engage with the public, and will give road users and local residents the chance to speak to staff that will be coming to their area, starting with Essex and Suffolk throughout March.

The minibus facility will open out into a larger exhibition, which will feature displays and presentations about road works in the area and road safety.

Highways England Capital Delivery Team Leader, Aran Nugent, said:

We are aware that the work we do has an impact on our road users, and so Highways England is eager to better engage with drivers and local residents so we can hear their comments, allay their concerns and answer any questions they may come to us with.

This mobile exhibition offers us an excellent opportunity to better get into those communities we will be working alongside, so we can speak with people to explain the work we are doing and the benefits it will bring for them, their town and this region. Last year we had a good response with people coming along to learn about roadworks and share their views, so we hope that interest will continue and grow further in 2018.

In the last financial year (2017/18), Highways England spent £61.4 million on essential maintenance across the East, including £3.5 million on new noise barriers on the M40 in Buckinghamshire, £3.1 million for a new roundabout with Harwich Road and the A120 near Wix, and a £3.5 million repair to the accident damaged Saddlebow Interchange on the A47 near King's Lynn.

This essential maintenance work is in addition to the longer term investment work, including new dual carriageways on several sections of the A47, widening the A12 in Essex, the £1.5 billion Cambridge to Huntingdon A14 upgrade, and the £4.4 – £6.2 billion Lower Thames Crossing.

Now drivers will be able to speak to Highways England staff about this whole range of road works that are happening soon and further in the future, with £34.4 million committed to maintaining the East's roads over the next year.

In the next financial year (2018/19), Highways England's maintenance work will include £2.75 million on resurfacing the A14 between Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds, £2.5 million on bridge repairs on the M1, A14 and A1, £2.25 million on resurfacing the A12, and a further £2.24 million on replacing digital message signs on the same road. Our work in the next year will include laying enough tarmac to fill 20 football pitches, enough white lining to fill an Olympic swimming pool, and enough cats' eyes to reflect enough light collectively to be seen from space.

In March, the exhibition is set to visit:

- Boreham House on Thursday 15 and the town's Springfield Sainsbury's on Friday 16
- Chelmsford city centre (outside Barclays) on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20
- Lion Walk, Colchester town centre on Wednesday 21, Thursday 22
- Braintree Freeport on Friday 23
- Great Bromley Village Hall on Monday 26
- Bricklayer's Arms, Little Bentley on Tuesday 27
- Bypass Nurseries, Capel St Mary, on Wednesday 28
- Ipswich County Council (Russell Road) on Thursday 29

The exhibition will then head to Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire in April, before covering the A47 with Norfolk and Peterborough in May.

These dates may be subject to change, and interested visitors are asked to stay up to date with the latest information by following @HighwaysEast on Twitter.

Members of the public are invited to attend the mobile visitor centre to speak with Highways England staff, which will include traffic officers at some of the exhibitions.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.