

January 2026

Department of People

Bolton Council: **A better place to rent**

Consultation on proposals for an Additional Licensing Scheme
for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)



Bolton
Council

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- Assistance completing the survey (by telephone or in person)

You can request these formats by contacting:

Housing Standards Team
Bolton Council
2nd Floor, Castle Hill Centre
Castleton Street, Bolton
BL2 2JW

The Consultation Line

Freephone: 08001223918

Opening hours: 24 hours per day/ 7 days per week

Calls will be returned within 2 working days

We will do our best to provide materials in your preferred format as quickly as possible. If you need help understanding the proposals or completing the survey, our consultation partner arc4 can also provide assistance.

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1. Executive Summary

Like many areas across the country, Bolton is facing growing pressure on its housing market. Rising property prices and a shortage of affordable housing have increased demand for private rented accommodation, particularly for people on low incomes, younger households, and those unable to access home ownership. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) play an important role in meeting this need by providing relatively low-cost accommodation for individuals and households who might otherwise struggle to secure a home. In recent years, however, the borough has experienced a substantial increase in smaller HMOs, with research indicating that more than 720 are now operating across all wards—many having been created under permitted development rights prior to the introduction of a boroughwide Article 4 Direction in June 2025.

While many landlords manage their HMOs responsibly, evidence from the council's inspections and complaints data demonstrates that a significant proportion of these properties are being managed ineffectively, creating risks for tenants and the wider community. Between 2022 and 2025, the council received almost 1,900 complaints about disrepair in rented housing, including 397 relating specifically to HMOs, despite these properties representing less than 1% of the borough's housing stock. Common concerns include poor property management, fire and electrical hazards, overcrowding, waste and refuse issues, and reports of anti-social behaviour—problems that can have a wider impact on neighbourhoods and local communities. Licensing would enable the council to ensure all HMOs are properly maintained, meet safety standards, and are managed responsibly.

Although concentrations of HMOs are particularly evident in areas such as the Haulgh, Chorley New Road, and central Farnworth, smaller HMOs are found in every ward across the borough, meaning these issues are not confined to a single location and require a consistent, boroughwide response.

To address these issues, Bolton Council is proposing to introduce a boroughwide Additional Licensing Scheme for smaller HMOs under Section 56 of the Housing Act 2004 and some self-contained flats. The scheme would extend licensing requirements to:

- Section 254 HMOs which are smaller HMOs occupied by 3 or 4 people forming two or more households sharing basic amenities such as kitchens or bathrooms; and
- Section 257 HMOs, where properties converted into flats do not meet the appropriate building standards and less than two-thirds of flats are owner-occupied.

An Additional Licensing Scheme would complement Bolton's recently introduced Article 4 Direction (effective June 2025), which removes permitted development rights for converting single dwellings into small HMOs without planning permission. Together, planning controls and licensing powers would help the council better manage the growth and quality of HMOs across the borough.

The benefits of the proposed Additional Licensing Scheme are:

- A reduction in the negative impact poorly managed and maintained HMOs have on tenants.

- Reduction in the negative impacts on wider communities in which HMOs operate that will benefit wider neighbourhoods.
- Improved standards and understanding of those standards by landlords and agents expected.
- Better protection of the health, safety, and welfare of tenants through improved safety and quality standards within the HMO.
- Improved management of privately rented accommodation and improved choice for residents.
- Licensing will require absentee landlords to employ a professional property management approach to actively manage their properties and ensure suitable arrangements are in place to deal with any problems that arise.
- Good private landlords would also benefit from not having to compete with poorly managed properties that do not meet the required standards at the same or lower cost.
- As with mandatory licensing, additional licensing will bring a significant number of properties to the council's attention that would otherwise have gone undetected. Currently, there is no requirement to register smaller HMOs, so the numbers and locations is an estimate.

The scheme would apply to all existing and future HMOs in Bolton meeting the criteria.

Bolton Council is now seeking the views of landlords, tenants, residents, businesses, and partner organisations on these proposals. The consultation will run for at least ten weeks and will provide multiple ways for people to access information and share their views—including online surveys, public drop-in sessions, and virtual events.

Your feedback will play a vital role in shaping the final design of the Additional Licensing Scheme, ensuring it is fair, transparent, and effective in delivering better housing and safer neighbourhoods for everyone in Bolton.

2. Introduction

About this Consultation

This consultation document provides information about the scale of problems relating to poor housing conditions and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Bolton's HMO sector and presents the evidence supporting the council's proposal to introduce an Additional HMO Licensing Scheme. It also sets out details of the proposed licence conditions, licence fees, and scope of the proposed scheme.

We want to know your views on these proposals before any final decision is made about Additional Licensing in Bolton. The council is keen to hear from Bolton residents, particularly private tenants, as well as landlords, managing and letting agents, businesses, and any other organisations or individuals with an interest in the Private Rented Sector.

We encourage you to share your views by completing our online questionnaire, available at: <https://app.keysurvey.co.uk/f/41831381/1413/> or use the QR code



The consultation will run from 2nd Feb 12pm until Sunday 19th April 11.59pm

For further information about the proposed Additional HMO Licensing Scheme, to request a paper copy of the consultation materials, or to get help completing the questionnaire, please contact:

- Email: Consultations@bolton.gov.uk
- Freephone: 08001223918, Opening hours: 24 hours per day/ 7 days per week. (You can request paper copies, ask questions, or get help completing the survey.). calls will be returned within 2 working days
- Post: Housing Standards Team, Bolton Council, 2nd Floor, Castle Hill Centre, Castleton Street, Bolton, BL2 2JW

After the consultation has closed, Bolton Council will review and analyse all feedback received. A full Consultation Report, including a summary of findings, key themes,

and the council's response to any alternative suggestions, will be published on the council's website.

Your feedback will help shape the final scheme design and will directly inform the council's decision on whether to introduce Additional Licensing across Bolton.

3. What is Property Licensing?

What is Property Licensing?

Property licensing is a legal mechanism that enables local authorities to regulate standards and management practices in the private rented housing sector. A property licence is issued to the person responsible for managing a rented property—usually the landlord or managing agent—and ensures that both the property and the licence holder meet required standards.

The purpose of licensing is to improve housing quality and safety, ensure that licence holders are fit and proper persons, and strengthen the overall management of the Private Rented Sector.

Each licence includes conditions that relate to the management, use, and occupation of the property. Some conditions are prescribed by national legislation, while others may be locally tailored to address specific issues identified within the borough—such as waste disposal, anti-social behaviour (ASB), or property maintenance.

The Housing Act 2004 establishes the framework for property licensing and sets out how local authorities can implement three distinct types of licensing schemes.

Mandatory HMO Licensing

Mandatory HMO licensing applies across England to larger Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). These are properties occupied by five or more people, forming two or more households, and sharing basic facilities such as kitchens or bathrooms.

All local authorities must operate a mandatory licensing scheme for these types of HMOs to ensure minimum safety and management standards are met.

For the purpose of this consultation, mandatory licensing is not being reviewed or amended. Instead, Bolton Council's focus is on extending licensing to smaller HMOs that currently fall outside the mandatory scheme.

Additional HMO Licensing (Discretionary)

Under Section 56 of the Housing Act 2004, councils can introduce Additional HMO Licensing Schemes to cover smaller HMOs or certain converted buildings where poor management, or property conditions are causing problems for occupiers or the wider community.

In Bolton, there has been a significant rise in the number of smaller HMOs, with a conservative estimate of over 720 such properties now operating across the borough. Many were converted under permitted development rights prior to the introduction of the council's Article 4 Direction (effective 13 June 2025), which now requires planning permission for new HMOs.

While many landlords operate responsibly, evidence from the council's Housing Standards Team indicates that a substantial proportion of smaller HMOs are poorly managed or unsafe, with recurring issues such as:

- Fire safety hazards;
- Electrical and structural defects;

- Overcrowding;
- Excess cold and damp; and
- Poor waste storage and pest infestations.

Over the past three years, the council has received 1,885 complaints about disrepair in rented homes, 397 of which related specifically to HMOs. Despite representing less than 1% of Bolton's housing stock, HMOs account for a disproportionately high number of complaints and enforcement actions.

To address these concerns, Bolton Council is considering the introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme that would extend regulation to:

- Smaller HMOs – those occupied by three or four people forming two or more households and sharing one or more basic amenities (kitchen, bathroom, or toilet); and
- Section 257 HMOs – buildings converted into self-contained flats where the conversion did not comply with building regulations in force at the time and less than two-thirds of flats are owner-occupied.

If approved, the scheme would apply boroughwide to all existing and newly created HMOs from the commencement date.

This consultation therefore seeks views on the proposal to introduce Additional HMO Licensing in Bolton, to help the council improve property standards, management practices, and neighbourhood quality across the borough.

Selective Licensing (Discretionary)

Selective licensing is another discretionary scheme available to local authorities under the Housing Act 2004. It applies to all privately rented properties, not just HMOs, within designated areas experiencing persistent housing or community issues.

A selective licensing designation can be made where an area meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Low housing demand;
- Significant and persistent anti-social behaviour;
- High levels of crime;
- Poor housing conditions; or
- High levels of deprivation or migration.

At this stage, Bolton Council is not proposing to introduce a selective licensing scheme. This consultation focuses solely on the proposal for Additional Licensing to improve standards in smaller HMOs and Section 257 properties.

What are the Key Benefits of HMO Licensing Schemes?

Property licensing delivers a range of benefits for tenants, landlords, the wider community, and the council, helping to create a safer, fairer, and better-managed Private Rented Sector across Bolton.

Benefits to Tenants

- Ensures landlords maintain their HMOs to a safe and decent standard, protecting tenants' health and wellbeing.
- Requires landlords to provide and maintain valid fire, gas, and electrical safety certificates.
- Helps the council take a proactive approach to identifying and addressing unsafe or substandard housing.
- Empowers tenants to understand their rights and responsibilities, improving access to advice and support.
- Reduces overcrowding and improves living conditions, particularly for vulnerable or low-income residents.

Benefits to Landlords

- Provides clear, consistent management standards and expectations across the borough.
- Encourages professionalism and good practice, supporting responsible landlords to operate on a level playing field.
- Builds stronger communication channels with the council and provides access to advice, guidance, and training.
- Deters unfair competition from landlords who neglect legal responsibilities, helping to improve the reputation of the sector.

Benefits to the Community

- Reduces anti-social behaviour, noise, and waste issues by requiring landlords to manage tenant conduct effectively.
- Helps improve the appearance and condition of neighbourhoods with high concentrations of rented homes.
- Supports better waste management through licence conditions requiring sufficient and appropriate refuse storage.
- Prevents overcrowding and the associated nuisance and safety issues.

Benefits to the Council

- Enables a more coordinated and intelligence-led approach to private sector housing regulation.
- Improves the accuracy of housing data, helping to identify previously unknown or unlicensed HMOs.
- Allows the council to provide targeted advice and enforcement, ensuring resources focus on the highest-risk properties.
- Strengthens partnerships between council teams, emergency services, and community organisations to tackle housing and neighbourhood issues effectively.

In summary, introducing an Additional Licensing Scheme in Bolton would help raise housing standards, protect vulnerable tenants, and promote fair practice among landlords—contributing to safer, better-managed, and more sustainable communities across the borough.

4. Planning and Other Regulatory Frameworks

This section explains how planning controls, building regulations, fire safety standards, and housing enforcement powers work alongside property licensing to ensure that HMOs in Bolton are safe, well-managed, and appropriately located. It also clarifies the role of the Article 4 Direction recently introduced by Bolton Council, and how it complements the proposed Additional HMO Licensing scheme.

Planning Legislation in Relation to HMOs

Certain properties require planning permission to be converted into Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The planning system defines HMOs within the national Use Classes Order:

- Class C3: Dwelling houses occupied by a single household.
- Class C4: Small HMOs occupied by three to six unrelated individuals sharing basic amenities.
- Sui Generis: Larger HMOs occupied by seven or more unrelated people.

Ordinarily, under national planning regulations, a change of use from Class C3 (dwelling house) to Class C4 (HMO) can occur without planning permission through what is known as permitted development rights.

However, where there is evidence that the uncontrolled growth of HMOs is negatively affecting local communities or housing availability, a local planning authority can issue an Article 4 Direction. This removes those permitted development rights, meaning planning permission must be obtained before a property can be converted into an HMO.

The Article 4 Direction in Bolton

On Friday 13 June 2025, Bolton Council introduced a boroughwide immediate Article 4 Direction removing permitted development rights for converting a dwelling house (Class C3) into a small HMO (Class C4) for up to six residents.

From that date onwards, all conversions from Class C3 to Class C4 require planning permission, allowing the council to consider the suitability of each proposed HMO in the context of its local area. Conversions of dwellings to HMOs for seven or more residents already require planning permission under national planning rules.

This measure was introduced in response to the rapid and unregulated growth of HMOs across Bolton. Many of these conversions were made under previous permitted development rights, leading to increased concentrations of HMOs in certain areas, notably Tonge with the Haulgh, Queens Park, Central, Smithills, and Farnworth, as well as smaller clusters in Horwich, Westhoughton, Little Lever, and Kearsley.

While the Article 4 Direction does not prevent new HMOs, it ensures that proposals are assessed on their planning merits. This allows the council to consider potential impacts such as:

- Increased noise and waste generation;
- Parking pressures and loss of family housing; and

- Changes to neighbourhood character and community balance.

Relationship Between Planning and Licensing

Planning permission and HMO licensing operate under separate legal frameworks but work together to improve standards within the Private Rented Sector.

- Planning controls determine whether a property can be used as an HMO in a given location.
- Licensing controls determine how that property is managed, maintained, and occupied.

A property may therefore require both planning permission and an HMO licence to operate lawfully. The granting of one does not automatically mean the other has been approved.

If a landlord applies for an Additional HMO licence without valid planning permission, the council may issue a short-term licence (for example, one year) to allow time for the applicant to obtain the necessary consents. Where a breach of planning control exists, the landlord must either:

- Resolve the breach by returning the property to single-family use; or
- Secure planning permission to regularise the HMO use.

The issuing of an HMO licence does not imply that planning permission or building control approval has been granted, nor does it prevent the council's Planning or Building Control teams from taking enforcement action where necessary. It remains the responsibility of the landlord to ensure all required consents are in place.

Coordination Between Council Departments and Partner Agencies

The effective regulation of HMOs in Bolton relies on close collaboration between several departments and external partners, including:

- Housing Standards – investigating disrepair, enforcing licence conditions, and inspecting HMOs.
- Planning and Building Control – assessing planning applications and compliance with construction and safety standards.
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service – advising on and enforcing fire safety standards in multi-occupied buildings.
- Environmental Health and Waste Services – addressing issues such as refuse, vermin, and anti-social behaviour.
- Community Safety and Neighbourhood Teams – supporting enforcement in areas with high concentrations of HMOs.

This coordinated approach ensures that the council can take a comprehensive and proactive stance to managing the growth, safety, and quality of HMOs across the borough.

Summary

The introduction of the Article 4 Direction and the proposed Additional Licensing Scheme represent complementary tools for improving housing conditions and community wellbeing in Bolton.

- Planning powers control where HMOs can be located.
- Licensing powers control how those HMOs are managed and maintained

Together, they will help Bolton Council achieve a more balanced, safe, and sustainable Private Rented Sector—ensuring that HMOs provide decent, well-managed homes for tenants while protecting the character and amenity of local neighbourhoods.

5. The Private Rented Sector in Bolton

The Census data provides clear evidence of how the local housing tenure profile has changed over time and the current scale of the Private Rented Sector.

Evidence from Census 2001, 2011, and 2021 shows a sustained increase in the proportion of homes in the Private Rented Sector over the last two decades. This indicates a long-term structural change in the local housing market, with private renting accounting for a larger share of housing stock in 2021 than in both 2001 and 2011.

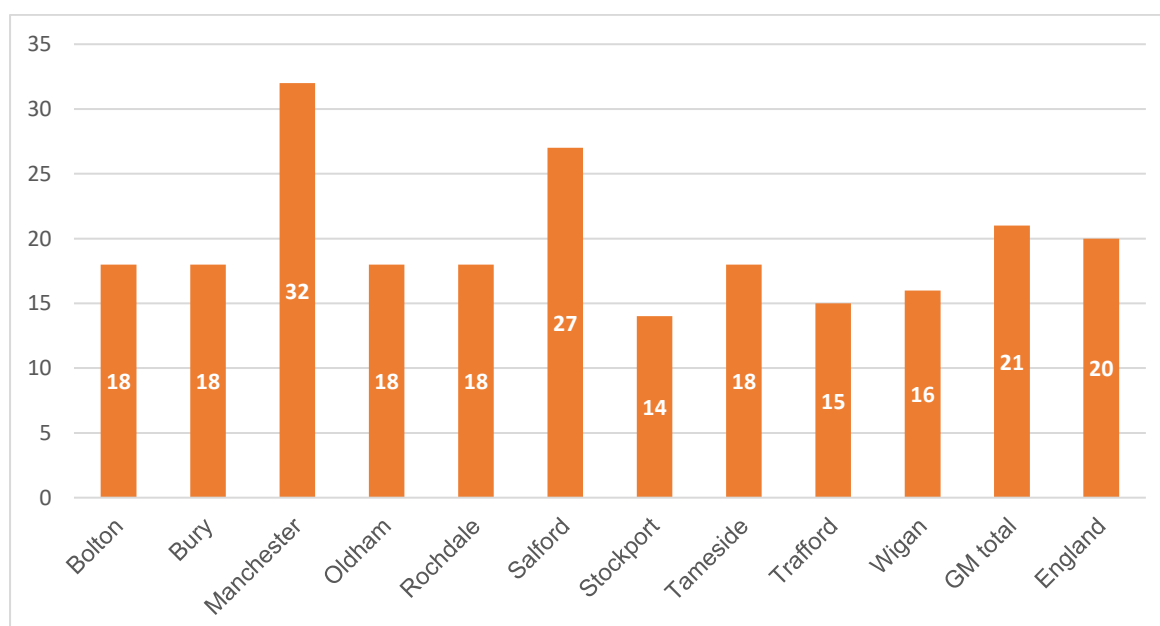
Data from Census 2021 confirms that the Private Rented Sector now represents a significant component of the overall housing stock. This growth has occurred alongside changes in other tenures, demonstrating a shift in how housing is provided locally rather than a short-term or cyclical change.

The Census data does not provide information on property condition or management quality; however, it does demonstrate that a growing proportion of homes fall within the scope of the Private Rented Sector. As a result, the influence of the PRS on overall housing standards and neighbourhood conditions has increased over time.

Taken together, the Census evidence shows:

- A clear and sustained growth in the Private Rented Sector between 2001 and 2021;
- An increased relative importance of the PRS within the local housing stock; and
- A larger number of properties that fall within the scope of private sector regulation.

The percentage of homes that are in the Private Rented Sector across Greater Manchester 2021 (%)



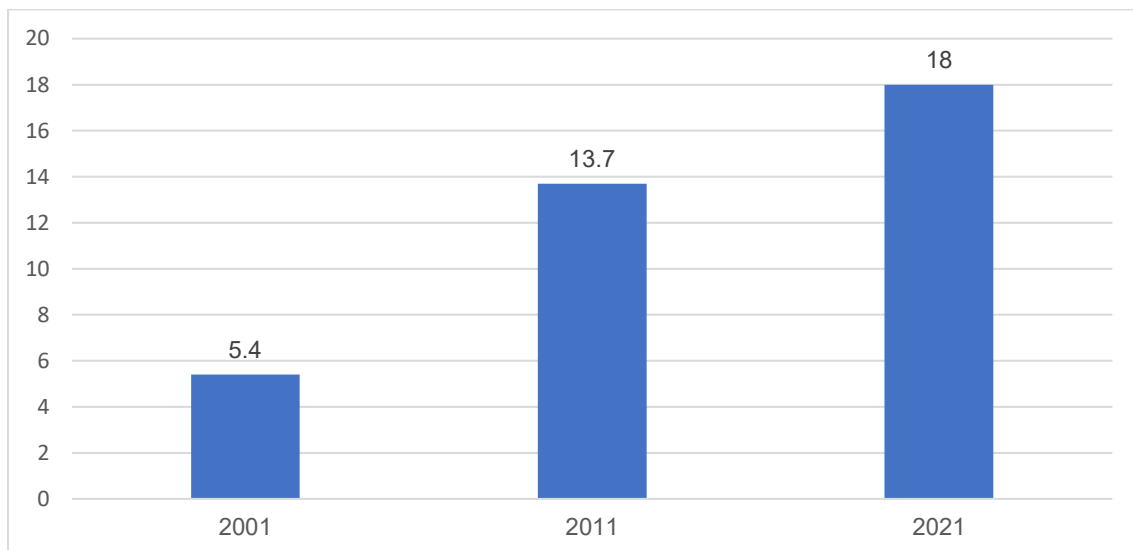
Source: Census 2021

The percentage of homes that are in the Private Rented Sector across Greater Manchester 2021 (%)

GM Area	Percentage of homes in PRS
Bolton	18%
Bury	18%
Manchester	32%
Oldham	18%
Rochdale	18%
Salford	27%
Stockport	14%
Tameside	18%
Trafford	15%
Wigan	16%
GM Total	21%
England	20%

Source: Census 2021

The percentage of homes that are in the Private Rented Sector in Bolton since 2001



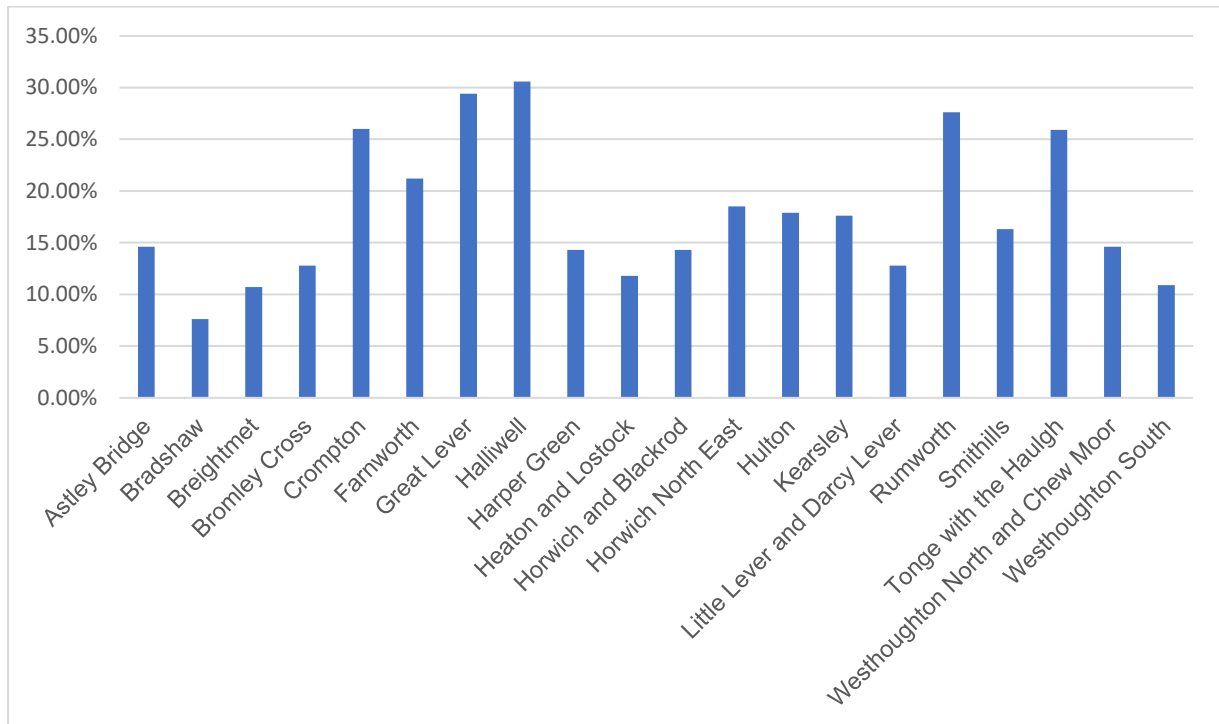
Source: Census 2001, 2011 and 2021

The percentage of homes that are in the Private Rented Sector in Bolton since 2001 (%)

Year	Percentage of homes in PRS Bolton since 2001
2001	5.4%
2011	13.7%
2021	18.0%

Source: Census 2001, 2011 and 2021

The percentage of homes that are in the Private Rented sector in each ward in Bolton 2021



Source: Census 2021

The percentage of homes that are in the Private Rented sector in each ward in Bolton 2021

Ward	Percentage of homes in PRS Bolton 2021
Astley Bridge	14.6%
Bradshaw	7.6%
Breightmet	10.7%
Bromley Cross	12.8%
Crompton	26.0%
Farnworth	21.2%
Great Lever	29.4%
Halliwell	30.6%
Harper Green	14.3%
Heaton and Lostock	11.8%
Horwich and Blackrod	14.3%
Horwich North East	18.5%
Hulton	17.9%
Kearsley	17.6%
Little Lever and Darcy Lever	12.8%
Rumworth	27.6%
Smithills	16.3%
Tonge with the Haulgh	25.9%
Westhoughton North and Chew Moor	14.6%
Westhoughton South	10.9%

Source: Census 2021

Rent Levels

Recent rental market data (as shown in the accompanying charts) indicates that rents across the North West have continued to rise at a significant pace, and Bolton has closely followed this pattern. Over the most recent year covered by the data, average monthly rents in the region increased from £870 to £927, demonstrating continued upward pressure within the Private Rented Sector.

The charts show that rental growth in Bolton has been evident across all property sizes and types. Terraced properties experienced an average rent increase of 9.1%, while rents for detached homes rose by 7.6% over the same period. When analysed by property size, the most pronounced increases were recorded for one-bedroom properties (9.4%), compared with 7.6% for four-bedroom and larger homes. This indicates that rental inflation is affecting smaller properties as well as family-sized accommodation.

By October 2025, average monthly rents in Bolton were:

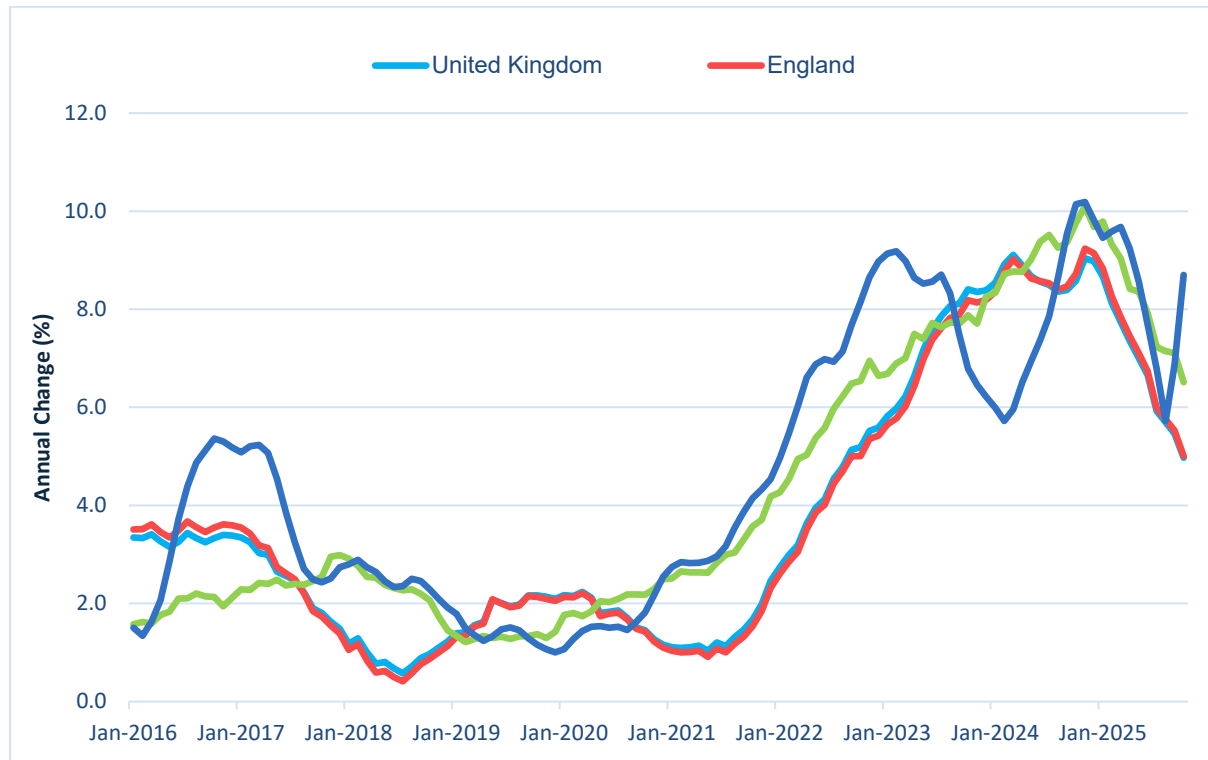
- One bedroom: £617
- Two bedrooms: £767
- Three bedrooms: £929
- Four or more bedrooms: £1,373

A similar pattern is evident when rents are examined by property type:

- Flats and maisonettes: £742
- Terraced properties: £808
- Semi-detached properties: £911
- Detached properties: £1,280

Taken together, the charts demonstrate a tightening rental market, with rising rents evident across the full range of property sizes and types. This trend increases the overall cost of private renting and heightens the importance of effective management and regulation within the sector.

Private rental price annual inflation, Bolton, January 2016 to October 2025



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR), UK: monthly price statistics, version 19 November 2025. Dataset available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/priceindexofprivaterentsukmonthlypricestatistics>

Rent trends in wards with the largest Private Rented Sectors

The chart showing rent changes between 2020 and 2025 highlights trends in the wards with the largest Private Rented Sectors: Bolton, Farnworth, Tonge with the Haulgh, Great Lever, Rumworth, Crompton, and Halliwell.

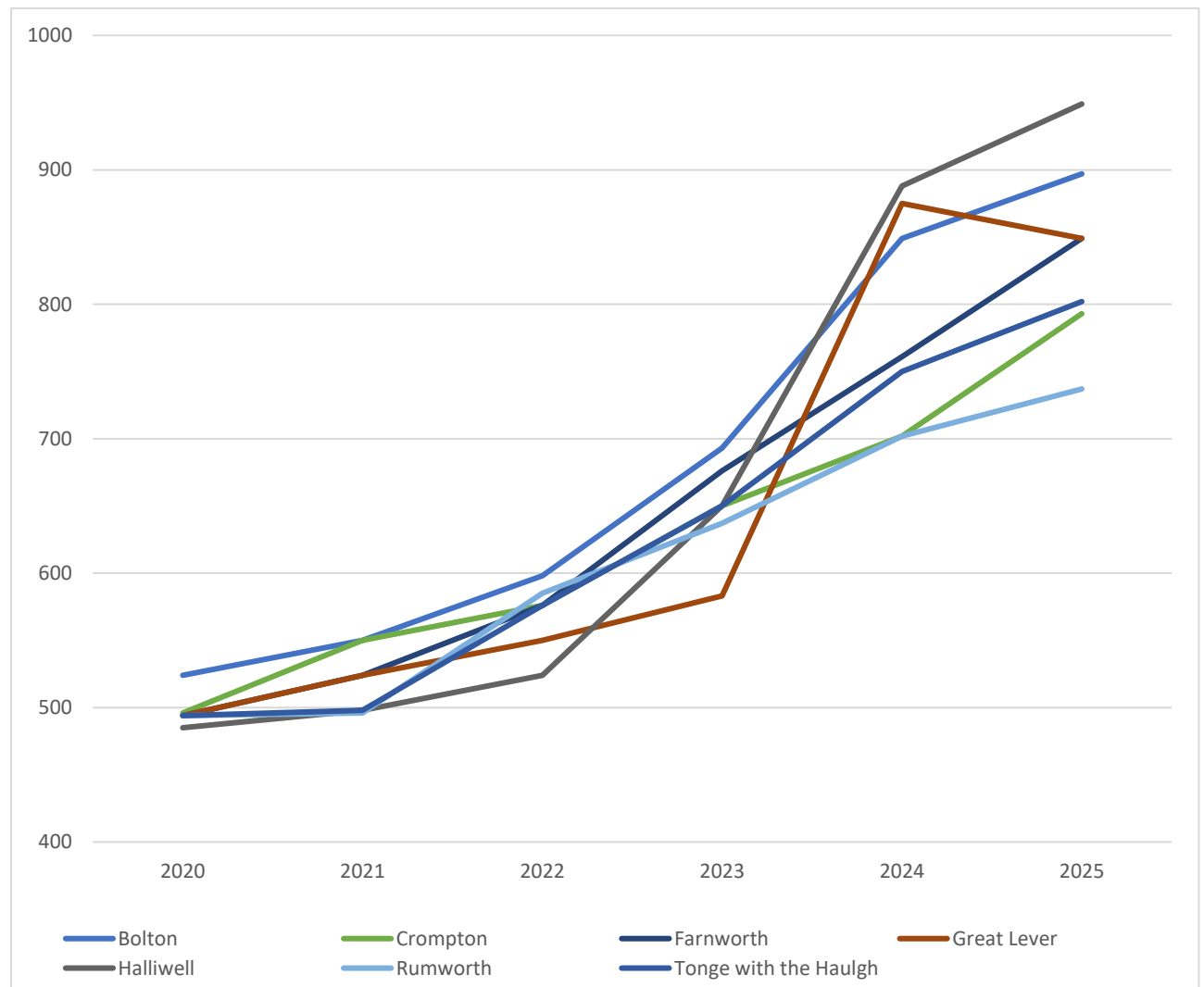
Across all these wards, the charts show consistent year-on-year rent increases, with the most rapid growth occurring between 2022 and 2024. Wards such as Halliwell and Great Lever display particularly steep upward trends, indicating stronger market pressures in these areas. By 2025, average rents across many of these wards had increased substantially compared with 2020 levels, with several approaching or exceeding £850-£900 per month.

These wards are notable because they contain some of the highest concentrations of private rented housing in the borough. As the charts demonstrate, rising rents in areas with a larger PRS footprint can intensify housing pressures, particularly where demand for lower-cost accommodation is strong and the supply of affordable alternatives is limited.

The rent trends shown in the charts form an important part of the wider evidence base for this Additional Licensing consultation. The sustained and widespread increase in rents across Bolton, and particularly in wards with large Private Rented Sectors, highlights the growing importance of ensuring that privately rented homes are well-managed, safe, and maintained to an appropriate standard.

While rent levels alone do not indicate property condition, the scale and pace of change illustrated in the charts reinforces the need to consider whether Additional Licensing could play a role in improving management standards, supporting compliance, and protecting tenants in areas experiencing the greatest market pressure.

Rent change in the wards with the largest PRS 2020-2025 (£pcm)



Rent change in the wards with the largest PRS 2020-2025 (£pcm)

Ward	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Bolton	£524	£550	£598	£693	£849	£897
Crompton	£496	£550	£576	£650	£702	£793
Farnworth	£494	£524	£576	£676	£761	£849
Great Lever	£494	£524	£550	£583	£875	£849
Halliwell	£485	£498	£524	£650	£888	£949
Rumworth	£494	£496	£585	£637	£702	£737
Tonge with the Haulgh	£494	£498	£576	£650	£750	£802

Affordability of the Sector

The table compares Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates with Lower Quartile private rents in Wigan, by property size. It shows that LHA rates are below Lower Quartile rents across all size categories, indicating a consistent affordability gap within the Private Rented Sector.

Monthly shortfalls range from around £150 for one-bedroom homes to over £300 for four-bedroom and larger properties. Significant gaps are also evident for shared accommodation and two and three-bedroom homes, demonstrating that the mismatch between LHA and market rents is widespread rather than limited to a particular part of the sector.

This evidence highlights ongoing affordability pressures at the lower end of the private rented market. While it does not indicate property condition, it forms part of the wider evidence base for this consultation by showing the financial context in which a growing proportion of private rented homes are let. This reinforces the importance of considering whether Additional Licensing could help support effective management and compliance within the sector, particularly where lower-cost accommodation is under pressure.

Comparison between LHA and private rents in Wigan

Bed No.	LHA Rate per Week (£)	Monthly Rate	2024 LQ Rent	Variance between LQ and LHA
Shared Accommodation	£78.59	£340.56	£585.00	-£244.44
1 Bedroom	£109.32	£473.72	£624.00	-£150.28
2 Bedrooms	£132.33	£573.43	£793.00	-£219.57
3 Bedrooms	£161.10	£698.10	£949.00	-£250.90
4+ Bedrooms	£218.63	£947.40	£1,248.00	-£300.60

6. The Challenges of Managing the Private Rented Sector in Bolton

The council's current enforcement powers include the issue of Improvement Notices, Emergency Remedial Action, Prohibition Orders, Civil Penalties (of up to £30,000), and prosecution. The council also carries out works in default where landlords fail to act and recovers costs where possible.

The table below provides an overview of trends in housing conditions, hazards, enforcement activity, and HMO licensing within Bolton's Private Rented Sector from April 2019 to March 25. It highlights the volume and nature of service requests received from tenants and residents, the level of inspection and reinspection work carried out by the Housing Standards Team, and the types of hazards most commonly identified during property assessments. The data also illustrates the range of enforcement actions taken by the council to address poor housing conditions, including the use of Hazard Awareness Notices, Improvement Notices, and Prohibition Notices, where serious risks to health and safety are identified. In addition, the table sets out activity relating to the borough's HMO sector, including the number of licences issued or renewed each quarter and the number of licensed HMOs in operation at the end of each year. The inclusion of civil penalties linked to HMO licensing offences further demonstrates the ongoing work undertaken to regulate the sector and ensure compliance with legislative requirements.

Bolton consistently manages a high volume of service requests, averaging around 3,000 per year, demonstrating strong resident engagement and an active regulatory presence. Waste accumulation remains a significant area of work, generating between 700-1,000 complaints annually, with the council routinely issuing abatement notices and undertaking works in default where landlords or tenants fail to comply.

Across the Private Rented Sector, Bolton responds to several hundred housing condition complaints each year and carries out substantial enforcement activity (258 in 2024/25). Officers' complete large numbers of HHSRS inspections and revisits, identifying significant hazards within the PRS. Over the monitoring period, the team regularly recorded high levels of serious (Category 1) and significant (Category 2) hazards, including persistent issues with excess cold, damp and mould, fire safety, and falls risks—all of which present major health and safety concerns. Hundreds of hazards are successfully removed every year, demonstrating strong follow-through and real improvements to tenant safety.

Bolton also uses a wide range of enforcement powers. Across the period, the council issued Hazard Awareness Notices, Improvement Notices, Prohibition Orders, and Smoke Alarm Notices, showing its willingness to intervene formally where landlords fail to meet legal standards. Enforcement activity has increased in recent years, reflecting growing demand and a proactive regulatory approach.

The council also maintains and grows its HMO licensing function, with the number of licences in force rising from around 138 to 196, and a notable increase in new licences issued or renewed in recent years. Civil penalties have been used where appropriate, particularly to address HMO licensing and management offences, and further cases are under investigation.

While these tools are important, they are primarily reactive and rely on tenants or neighbours reporting problems. They do not create a proactive framework to ensure

landlords manage properties to a consistent standard. The council therefore considers that Additional HMO Licensing would complement its existing enforcement strategy by introducing preventative, boroughwide regulation for smaller HMOs.

HOUSING STANDARDS	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 to 30/9/25
Total number of service requests received	3,700	2,912	3,004	2,910	2,945	2,988	2,082
Housing conditions — Private Rented Sector							
Number of service requests about housing conditions	482	367	571	562	476	454	185
Number of Housing Health & Safety Rating System Inspections (HHSRS)	314	55	166	158	217	232	94
Total number of housing revisits	618	131	249	128	152	228	218
Category 1 hazards identified	169	40	94	128	220	178	102
Category 2 hazards identified	751	134	402	364	613	592	321
Number of hazards removed	534	254	161	Not recorded	158	292	265
Top hazards identified in properties							
Excess cold	76	20	36	48	71	67	32
Damp and mould growth	127	29	79	72	122	112	62
Falls on stairs hazards identified	49	7	34	27	63	36	19
Fire hazards identified	131	15	65	78	85	82	36
Housing Enforcement Action							
Total number of Hazard Awareness Notices served	250	39	115	106	162	174	85
Total number of Suspended Improvement Notices served	24	14	20	16	3	6	7
Total number of Improvement Notices served	26	8	15	9	8	11	10
Total number of Prohibition Notices served	15	5	15	10	15	23	6
Smoke Alarm notices served	19	3	7	4	25	44	17
HMO Licences							
Number of HMO licences issued or renewed in Qtr	18	20	40	8	34	63	22
Number of HMO licences currently in force at end of Yr	138	111	151	159	156	188	196
Civil penalties	3	0	0	0	0	0	3

2025 penalties all relate to HMO licensing and management regulation offences. A number of other cases are currently being investigated for HMO offences with civil penalties likely

Bolton Council's Housing Standards Team has been involved in proactively tackling rogue landlords for a number of years, as well as supporting various multi-agency activities aimed at the disruption of criminal activities linked to the Private Rented Sector and associated commercial premises. The Housing Standards Team already work closely with GMP Challenger Bolton, which aims to tackle organised crime. Through this process, it is recognised that the Private Rented Sector poses a significant threat when trying to address serious and organised crime and modern-day slavery, with many cases involving some element of housing of either victim/offender within the Private Rented Sector.

There is a clear synergy between tackling rogue landlords and disrupting and prosecuting individuals involved or linked to serious and organised crime. Gathering intelligence and taking a proactive approach towards those who are involved in both the management and procurement of properties in the Private Rented Sector therefore plays an important role.

Previous work around rogue landlords has indicated that Bolton also has localised issues that differ by ward, which impact negatively on the local community and often involve various council services to deal with the problems caused. Issues identified include large scale overcrowding and subletting, with people letting properties as individuals or families and then subletting the properties as houses in multiple occupation. This may be with or without the owner's knowledge, but the impact is unsafe and overcrowded accommodation which then results in complaints regarding anti-social behaviour, noise, and waste.

Many of these cases have involved liaison with police and immigration following weeks of action designed to tackle local issues in both Bolton and the wider Greater Manchester area. Experience gained in this area has indicated that another particular cause for concern are flats above commercial premises. These types of properties can often form Houses in Multiple Occupation, which can go undetected and unregulated, therefore conditions can be poor and dangerous, with occupiers unable or unwilling to complain.

The clear community benefit to having a joined up multi-agency approach to tackling problems associated with the Private Rented Sector means that we are able to act on and disrupt anti-social and criminal activities much more effectively than individual agencies acting in isolation. The sharing of information enables trends and patterns to be established.

Case Study: Unlicensed HMO and “Bed in a Shed”

The Housing Standards Team received a complaint regarding 5 males living in a semi-detached property and a female living in a “wash house” in the garden. Residents were concerned that the occupants had been trafficked and were being exploited, and a female has been seen leaving the shed in shower attire to enter the property and return to the shed.

An unannounced inspection was carried out:

Inside the property, a number of issues were evident and of concern immediately:

- No smoke detectors in the main property or in the outbuilding.
- No fire doors on the rooms in the property, nor was there any door to the kitchen.
- No safety standards or amenity provisions for a property to be required in a HMO.

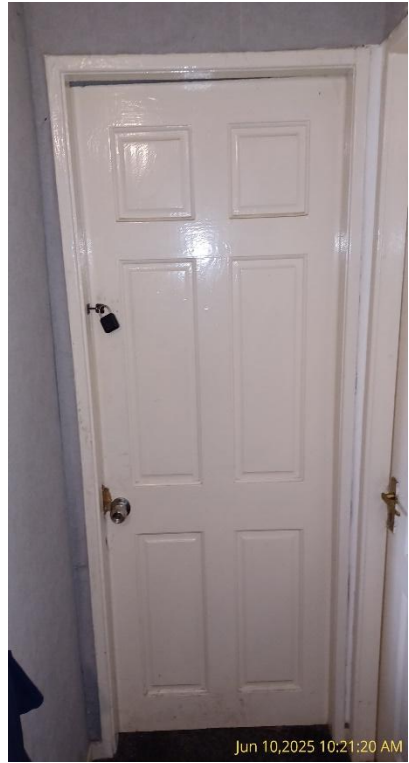
Increased concerns were noted regarding the outbuilding:

- Double bed present and appeared to be being slept in.
- Makeshift bathroom with toilet, wash hand basin, and shower cubicle.
- Makeshift kitchen with microwave, sink & drainer, plug in single electric hob.
- 2 windows that had been boarded up so no natural light or ventilation provision.
- Poor condition structurally with areas of the floor dipped causing trip hazards.
- Flat roof with no evidence of any insulation.
- Only cold-water provision.

The landlord was contacted to meet on site and a number of Category 1 hazards found:

- Fire
- Excess Cold
- Entry By Intruders
- Damp & Mould

A Civil Penalty is currently being issued to the owner for breaches of HMO Management Regulations.



Previously Bolton Council successfully applied for dedicated enforcement funding to investigate and address rogue landlord activity. This funding allowed the creation of a multi-agency project, bringing together Housing Standards, Greater Manchester Police, Immigration Enforcement, and Fire and Trading Standards to proactively inspect high-risk properties rather than waiting for complaints. The aim was to uncover substandard and illegally used accommodation, particularly in parts of the PRS that typically fall outside mandatory licensing controls.

The project delivered 668 additional inspections. 382 hazards were identified, including 101 Category 1 hazards requiring immediate action. Officers uncovered unlicensed HMOs, dangerous living conditions above commercial premises, severe overcrowding, fire safety risks, inadequate heating, and other serious failings. Compliance levels in HMO-type accommodation were worse than expected, confirming that a significant proportion of the sector remains unregulated and unsafe under the existing mandatory regime.

Crucially, the project also proved that Bolton Council can achieve substantial improvements when it intervenes proactively. Unsafe accommodation was prohibited or improved, rogue landlords were challenged, and vulnerable residents were protected. The evaluation showed that every £1 spent generated £5.88 in savings to the NHS and wider society—over £1.5 million in total savings—by removing hazards linked to poor health and injury. This demonstrates both the scale of the problem and the clear public benefit of stronger regulation.

7. Why an Additional Licensing Scheme is Proposed

Mandatory HMO licensing only applies to larger properties with five or more occupants, leaving the majority of smaller HMOs unregulated despite evidence of poor management and unsafe conditions. This section has detailed evidence about HMOs.

Analysis of known Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) demonstrates that the sector is both extensive and geographically widespread across Bolton. The map of HMO locations shows several hundred properties dispersed throughout the borough's built-up areas, rather than being concentrated in a small number of neighbourhoods. The greatest density of HMOs is found in and around Bolton town centre, including Halliwell, Rumworth/Deane, Great Lever, and parts of Farnworth and Kearsley. However, notable clusters are also present in suburban settlements such as Horwich, Westhoughton, and Little Lever. This indicates that HMOs form a significant and established element of the borough's wider Private Rented Sector.

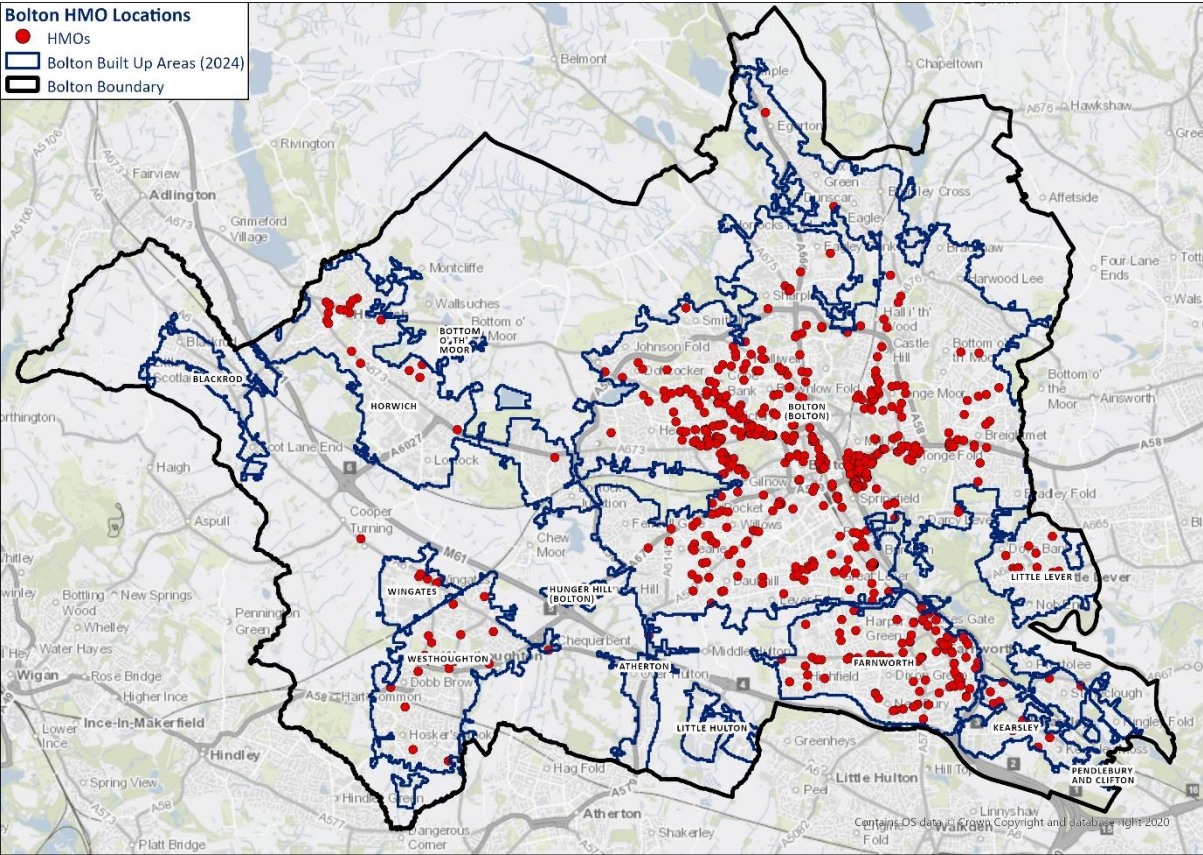
The spatial pattern highlights that HMOs are present in almost all residential areas of Bolton, typically within older terraced housing where conversions are most common. Their broad distribution suggests that the management challenges and housing standards associated with HMOs are unlikely to be confined to isolated pockets of the borough. Instead, the HMO sector interacts with a wide range of communities, services and neighbourhoods, with implications for housing quality, tenant safety, and the local environment.

This borough-wide presence has important implications for the potential introduction of Additional Licensing. National guidance requires local authorities to demonstrate that management issues linked to HMOs are sufficiently widespread to justify a designated licensing area. The mapped distribution strongly supports the case for a borough-wide approach, as targeting only specific neighbourhoods would exclude a large proportion of HMOs from regulation and would risk displacing issues into areas not covered by a scheme. A consistent borough-wide designation would provide clarity for landlords and tenants while enabling a proactive and fair enforcement approach across all communities.

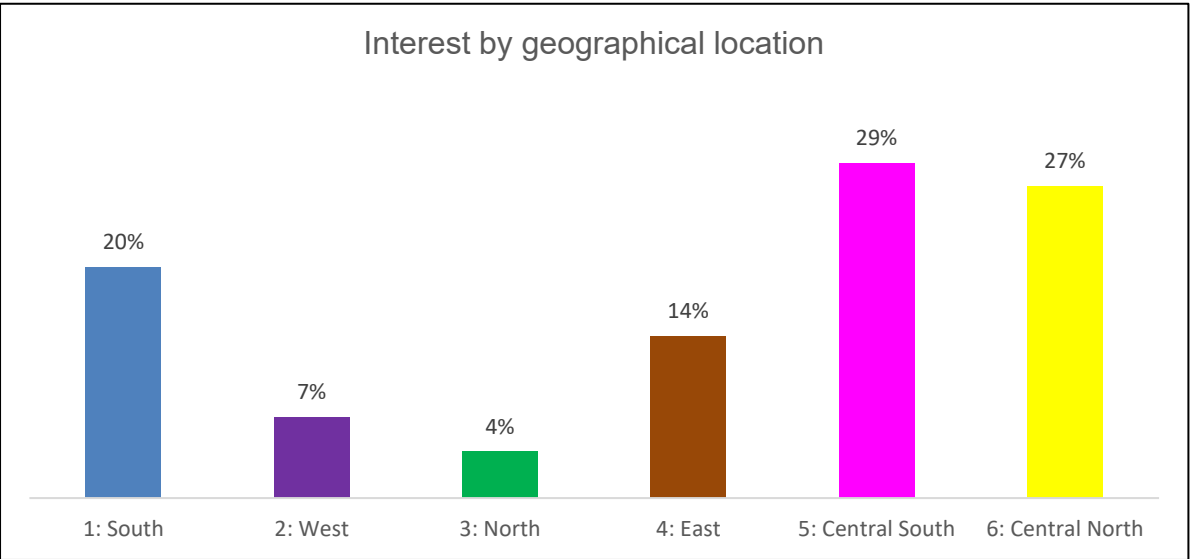
As of November 2025, a total of 198 properties in Bolton have been issued with a mandatory HMO licence. These licensed HMOs accommodate 1,148 residents, all living in properties that have been inspected and are subject to ongoing oversight by the Housing Standards Team.

At present, there is no reliable method to determine the full number of properties operating as HMOs without the required mandatory licence. However, during 2025, the Housing Standards Team received 74 service requests relating specifically to suspected unauthorised or unlicensed HMOs. This level of activity suggests that, while the licensed sector is sizeable and monitored, there may be a significant number of HMOs operating outside the mandatory licensing regime. These unlicensed properties may present heightened risks in relation to housing conditions, management standards, and tenant safety.

Bolton HMO Locations



HMO Geographies- The table below outlines where HMOs are located by geographical neighbourhood (bar chart). There is a total of 719 HMOs situated across the borough of Bolton. The neighbourhoods containing the greatest number of HMOs are Central South (29% / 205), Central North (27% / 197) and South (20% / 141).



The table below outlines ward level data. The wards containing the greatest number of HMOs are:

- Queens Park & Central (25% / 182)
- Tonge with the Haulgh (18% / 126)
- Farnworth North (8% / 61)
- Great Lever (7% / 52)
- Farnworth South (6% / 46)

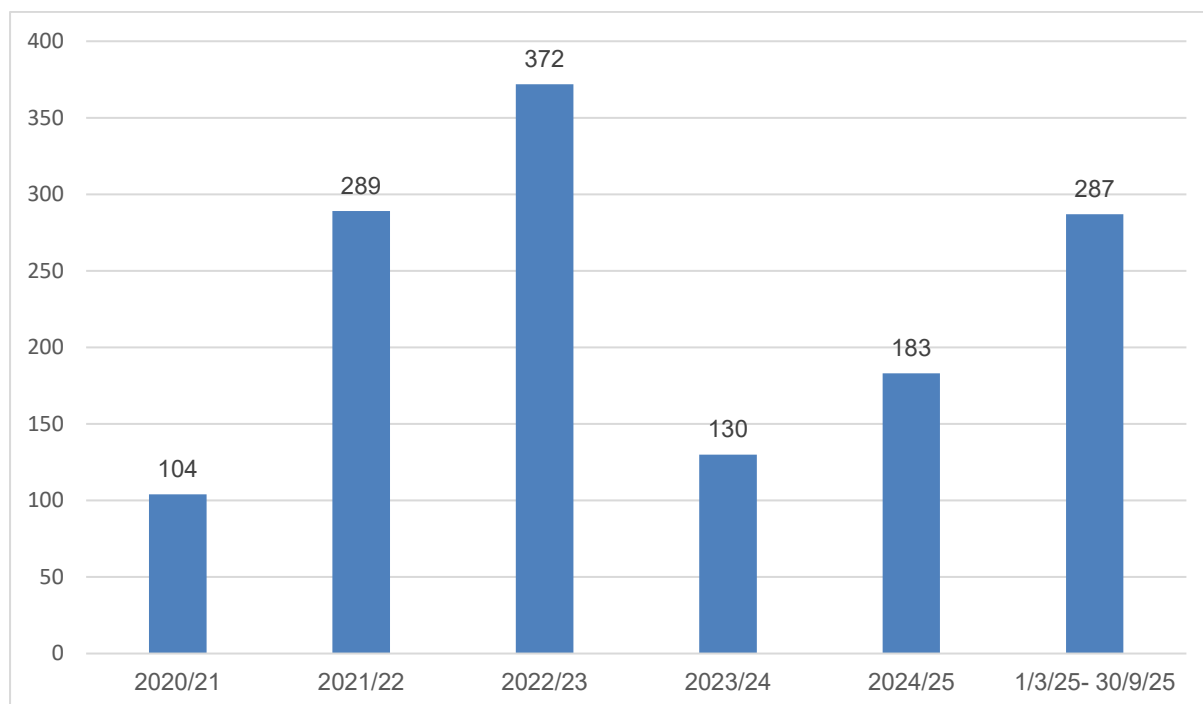
Wards	Number	%
Astley Bridge	13	2%
Bradshaw	6	1%
Breightmet	21	3%
Bromley Cross	3	0%
Farnworth North	61	8%
Farnworth South	46	6%
Great Lever	52	7%
Halliwell	32	4%
Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor	9	1%
Horwich North	22	3%
Horwich South & Blackrod	1	0%
Hulton	12	2%
Kearsley	23	3%
Little Lever & Darcy Lever	13	2%
Queens Park & Central	182	25%
Rumworth	37	5%
Smithills	33	5%
Tonge with the Haulgh	126	18%
Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill	20	3%
Westhoughton South	7	1%

Property Conditions & Housing Standards Data

Section 6 highlighted a number of the challenges of managing the Private Rented Sector and enforcement action that is taken. The table below details all service requests linked to HMOs received by Housing Standards. The 2025/26 figures also include proactive licensing and Management Regulation inspections.

Service requests cover a variety of issues including overcrowding, fire safety, waste accumulations, fire safety concerns, properties not being managed, nuisance behaviour etc.

HMO Service Requests 2020/21 to 9/5/25



Source: Bolton Council

HMO Service Requests 2020/21 to 9/5/25

Year	Number of HMO Service Requests
2020/21	104
2021/22	289
2022/23	372
2023/24	130
2024/25	183
1/3/25 - 30/9/25	287

Complaints

The table and chart show the number of all housing-related complaints and those identified as HMO-related complaints between 2020 and 2025.

In 2020, HMO-related complaints accounted for 142 cases, representing a relatively small proportion of total complaints. This rose to 207 in 2021, before fluctuating in 2022 (160 complaints). From 2023 onwards, there is a clear upward trend, with 227 HMO-related complaints in 2023, increasing sharply to 321 in 2024, and 611 during the first half of 2025.

Across the full period, a total of 1,668 HMO-related complaints were recorded, accounting for a growing share of the 11,261 housing complaints logged overall. By 2025, HMO-related complaints represent a substantially higher proportion of all complaints than in earlier years, indicating an increasing level of contact with the council relating specifically to HMOs. This trend demonstrates a rising level of HMO-related concern and enforcement demand over time, particularly in the most recent

years. While complaint data does not confirm breaches in every case, the scale and growth of HMO-related complaints provide evidence that HMOs are an increasingly significant element of housing service demand.

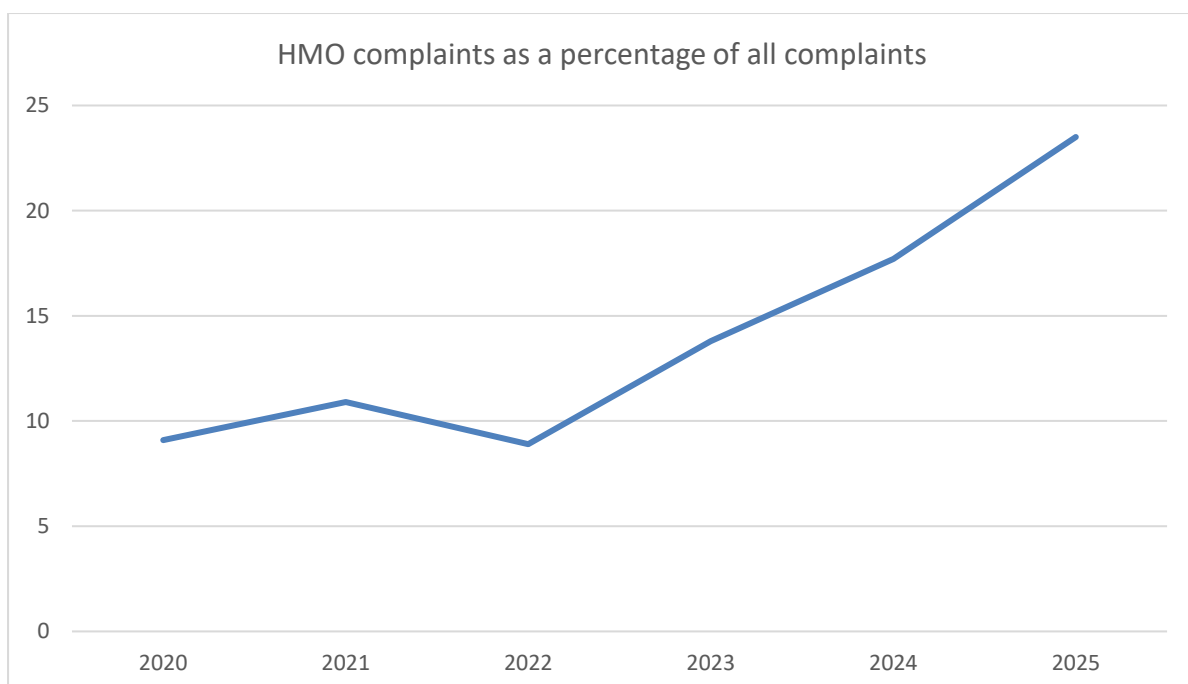
This data therefore forms part of the wider evidence base in considering whether Additional Licensing could help improve oversight, compliance, and management standards within the HMO sector, particularly in areas where complaints and enquiries are becoming more frequent.

Number and percentage of HMO related complaints 2020-2025

Year	All Complaints	HMO Related Complaints (number)	HMO Related Complaints (percentage)
2020	1,552	142	9.1%
2021	1,884	207	10.9%
2022	1,793	160	8.9%
2023	1,635	227	13.8%
2024	1,804	321	17.7%
2025	2,593	611	23.5%
Total	11,261	1,668	14.8%

Source: Bolton Council

HMO complaints as a percentage of all complaints



Source: Bolton Council

The council's HMO complaints and enquiry log (2020-2025) shows a consistent flow of HMO-related contacts over time, indicating that concerns linked to HMOs are not isolated incidents but an ongoing feature of local housing and enforcement activity.

A recurring feature of the records is the frequency of entries logged as “possible HMO” or “potential unlicensed HMO”, alongside requests to confirm licensing status. This suggests that a proportion of suspected HMOs are coming to the council’s attention through complaints, referrals and intelligence, rather than through routine identification or confirmed licensing routes.

The log also highlights repeated themes associated with property management and safety, including references to fire safety concerns and incidents (e.g. alarms, fire doors, fire protection), overcrowding or multiple occupation, disrepair and damp/mould, and issues in communal areas such as waste, cleaning, and nuisance. While the log does not provide a verified assessment outcome for every case, it evidences the nature of issues prompting contact with the council.

Entries also appear concentrated in particular neighbourhoods, with frequent references to wards including Great Lever, Tonge with the Haulgh, Halliwell, Farnworth (North and South), Rumworth, and Crompton. This suggests that HMO-related concerns are not evenly distributed across the borough, and that certain areas experience greater reporting and enforcement demand.

Taken together, this dataset provides part of the wider evidence base for the consultation by demonstrating ongoing HMO-related concerns, including suspected unlicensed activity and management/safety issues, and helps to inform consideration of whether Additional Licensing could support improved oversight, compliance, and management standards in areas where these issues are most evident.

Case Studies

The following case studies are drawn from recent enforcement and inspection activity within the borough. They are included to illustrate the types of issues encountered in some Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and to provide practical examples of the risks that can arise where properties are poorly managed or operating outside regulatory requirements.

The case studies demonstrate a range of concerns identified through inspections, including fire safety deficiencies, inadequate means of escape, unsuitable internal layouts, missing safety certification, and properties operating as HMOs without the required licence or permissions. While each case is specific to an individual property, together they highlight recurring themes that place increased demands on regulatory and enforcement services.

These examples are not intended to represent all HMOs in the borough. Many landlords manage their properties responsibly and in compliance with relevant standards. However, the case studies help to illustrate why the council is considering whether Additional Licensing could provide a more effective framework for identifying HMOs earlier, improving compliance, and ensuring appropriate management standards, particularly in areas where HMOs are more prevalent.

Under an Additional Licensing Scheme, each of these five properties would be subject to inspection and licensing requirements.

Case Study 1: Two-storey semi-detached property (4 bedrooms, 5 occupants)

This property was operating as an unlicensed House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The inspection identified inadequate fire detection for a two-storey HMO and an unsatisfactory means of escape, as the escape route was not provided with 30-minute fire protection and no fire doors were fitted.

One bedroom contained a boiler, which meant that heating controls were not accessible to all occupants, rendering the internal layout unsuitable for multiple occupation. Exit doors were not fitted with thumb-turn locks, restricting safe escape in the event of a fire. In addition, several mandatory safety certificates, including an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR), were not in place.

Case Study 2: Two-storey semi-detached property (4 bedrooms, 4 occupants)

This property was also identified as an HMO with inadequate fire detection for a two-storey layout. The means of escape was unsatisfactory, as escape routes were not 30-minute fire protected and fire doors were not installed.

Exit doors were not fitted with thumb-turn locks, which would hinder escape in the event of a fire. The property did not have valid gas or electrical safety certification. During the investigation, the landlord stated that he and his wife had converted three additional properties into HMOs, highlighting wider compliance concerns.

Case Study 3: Converted cellar accommodation within the landlord's home (3 bedrooms, 3 occupants)

This property involved the conversion of cellar accommodation within the landlord's residential home. Fire detection was inadequate, with only a single smoke alarm present, meaning occupants may not be alerted promptly in the event of a fire.

The escape route was unsatisfactory, lacking 30-minute fire protection and fire doors. One bedroom, occupied by a couple, had insufficient natural light and ventilation. A second bedroom, occupied by a single person, did not have a window. A third bedroom was vacant but actively being advertised for rent.

The kitchen contained a telescopic ladder leading to a lightwell window, which appeared sealed shut. A means of escape should not be via a risk room such as a kitchen. Exit doors were not fitted with thumb-turn locks, and there were no gas or electrical safety certificates in place.

Case Study 4: Four-storey terraced property with attic and cellar conversion (8 bedrooms and a self-contained flat, 7 occupants)

This large, multi-storey property was operating as an HMO with significant fire safety and management issues. Fire detection was inadequate, relying on stand-alone smoke detectors rather than an appropriate system for a property of this size.

The escape route was not 30-minute fire protected, and fire doors were not fitted. One bedroom contained a boiler and, although the landlord stated it was no longer occupied, it still contained a bed and personal belongings. Another bedroom did not have a window and was reportedly used for storage, despite containing bedroom furniture.

The self-contained flat within the property lacked sufficient natural daylight, had no smoke detection, and relied on escape via a risk room (the kitchen). The window did not provide a suitable alternative means of escape. The flat also housed the consumer unit and emergency gas shut off for the entire building, yet the landlord did not hold a key, meaning emergency access could not be guaranteed.

No safety certificates were in place, and the building had been converted without the required planning permission.

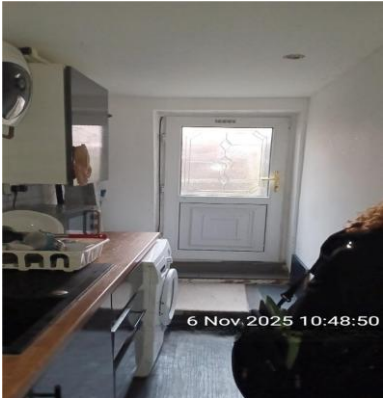
Case Study 5: Two-storey terraced property (4 bedrooms, 4 occupants)

This property was originally designed as a two-bedroom terraced house. The lounge had been converted into a bedroom and the attic adapted with a roof-light to create additional sleeping accommodation, resulting in four bedrooms.

Fire detection was inadequate, consisting only of stand-alone smoke detectors. The escape route was unsatisfactory, with no 30-minute fire protection and no fire doors. Escape from the first-floor bedrooms relied on passing through the kitchen, which is considered a risk room. One bedroom had a partially boarded-up roof-light, leaving the occupant without an alternative means of escape.

Exit doors were not fitted with thumb-turn locks, and no safety certification was in place. Due to the seriousness of the risks identified, the landlord was served with an Emergency Prohibition Order, two additional Prohibition Orders, and a formal request to provide documentation to support further investigation. Emergency interim measures were required, including the installation of interlinked smoke detection and thumb-turn locks. Fire Risk Assessments were carried out, alongside enforcement action, including interviews under caution and potential prosecution or civil penalty, is being considered.







Wider Neighbourhood Issues

To demonstrate how concentrations of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Bolton are associated with wider neighbourhood issues, the current known distribution of HMOs across the borough has been mapped. These datasets are overlaid spatially to identify areas where these outcomes are more prevalent and to explore whether any patterns align with the locations of HMOs.

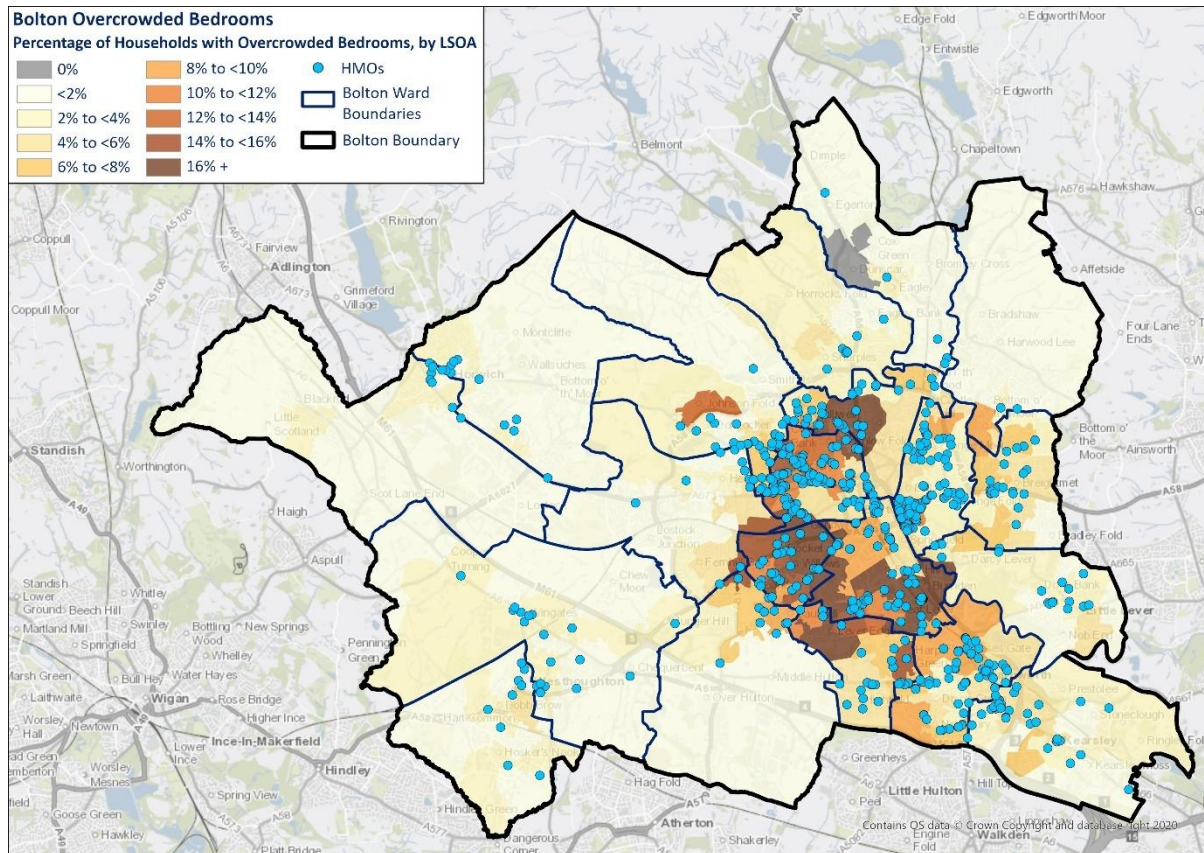
This approach does not assume causation; rather, it provides an initial picture of how HMOs sit within the broader social and environmental context of the neighbourhoods in which they are located. Because many of these indicators reflect both area characteristics and the circumstances of the people living there, the analysis helps to highlight places where multiple pressures may coincide. At the time of writing, there is no crime, outcome, or stop and search data available. The Greater Manchester force is progressing towards a new IT system and data processes which will support provision of data to [police.uk](https://www.police.uk) in the future. Some data is available directly from the GMP website [GMP website](https://www.gmp.police.uk).

Overcrowding

The map shows the percentage of households living in overcrowded bedrooms at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level across Bolton, alongside the recorded locations of HMOs. It indicates that higher levels of overcrowding are concentrated in a number of central and inner-urban areas, with several LSOAs recording some of the highest proportions of overcrowded households.

The distribution of HMOs closely overlaps with these areas, with a notable clustering of HMOs within and around LSOAs experiencing the greatest levels of overcrowding. While the presence of HMOs does not in itself indicate poor conditions, the spatial relationship shown on the map suggests that areas with a higher concentration of HMOs are also areas where overcrowding pressures are more pronounced. This evidence is relevant to the Additional Licensing consultation as it highlights locations where the intensity of multiple occupation and housing pressure is greatest, and where additional regulatory oversight through licensing could help improve management standards, monitor occupancy levels, and reduce the risk of overcrowding within the Private Rented Sector.

Percentage of households with overcrowded bedrooms by LSOA (Bolton)

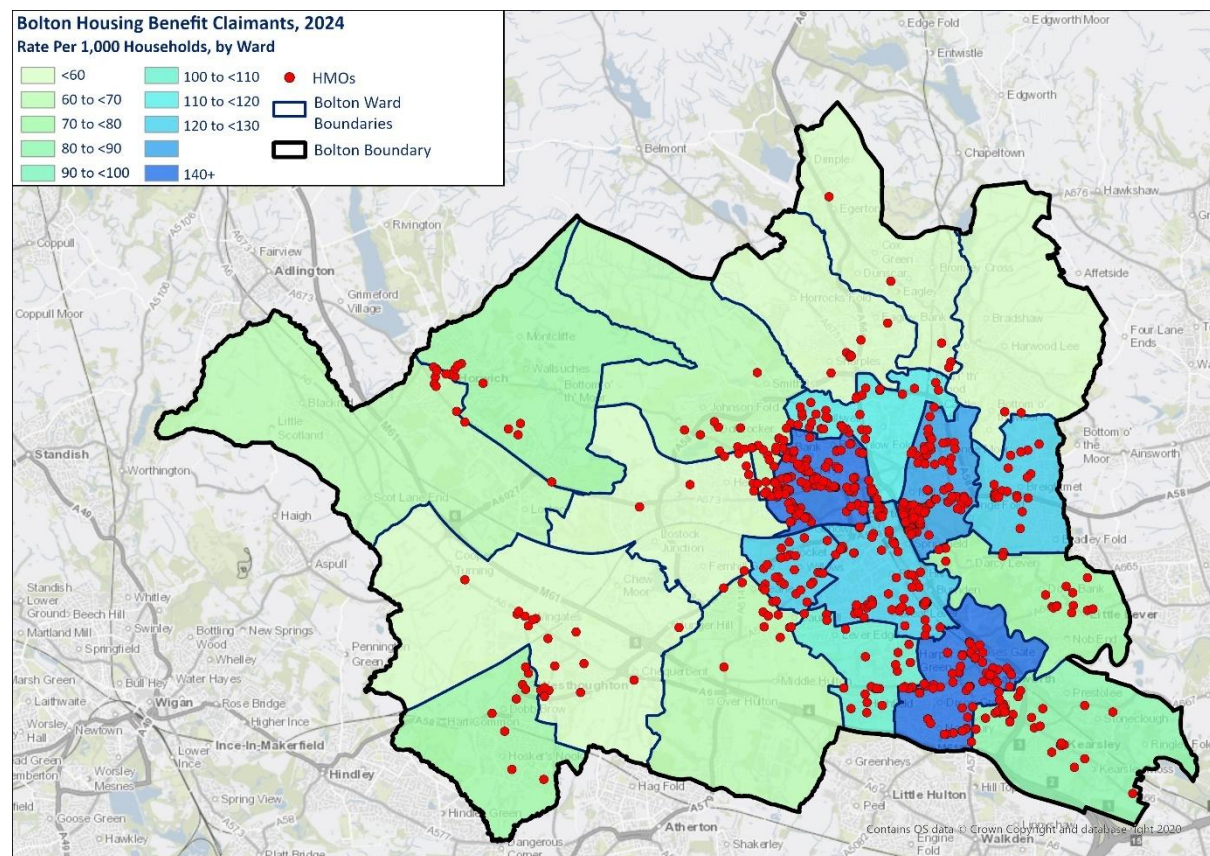


Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Census 2021 via Nomis (table TS052).
Extracted dataset was used to produce this map. Dataset information available at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/c2021ts052>

Housing Benefit Claimants

The map shows the rate of Housing Benefit claimants per 1,000 households by ward in 2024, alongside the recorded locations of HMOs across Bolton. It highlights that higher Housing Benefit claimant rates are concentrated in a number of central and inner-urban wards, with these same areas also showing a notable clustering of HMOs. While the presence of HMOs does not in itself indicate Housing Benefit dependency, the spatial pattern demonstrates that areas with larger private rented and HMO sectors are also areas where reliance on housing-related financial support is more prevalent. This is relevant to the Additional Licensing consultation because it helps identify locations where market pressures, affordability constraints, and higher levels of private renting coincide, and where additional regulatory oversight through licensing could support improved management standards, greater compliance, and more effective engagement with landlords operating at scale within the HMO sector.

Bolton Housing Benefit Claimants 2024 (rate per 1,000 households by Ward)



Bolton Housing Benefit Claimants 2024 (rate per 1,000 households by Ward)

Ward	Ward 2022	Average 2024	Total Households	2024 Housing Benefit Claimants, per 1,000 households (ward)
E05000650	Astley Bridge	336	5,962	56
E05000651	Bradshaw	215	4,951	44
E05000652	Breightmet	755	6,012	126
E05000653	Bromley Cross	167	5,963	28
E05000654	Crompton	786	6,749	116
E05000655	Farnworth	978	6,681	146
E05000656	Great Lever	726	5,767	126
E05000657	Halliwel	1,235	6,180	200
E05000658	Harper Green	574	5,437	106
E05000659	Heaton and Lostock	90	5,395	17
E05000660	Horwich and Blackrod	394	6,464	61
E05000661	Horwich North East	453	5,693	80
E05000662	Hulton	409	5,880	70
E05000663	Kearsley	545	6,575	83
E05000664	Little Lever and Darcy Lever	406	5,602	72
E05000665	Rumworth	709	5,822	122
E05000666	Smithills	389	6,026	65
E05000667	Tonge with the Haulgh	786	5,838	135
E05000668	Westhoughton North and Chew Moor	322	6,197	52
E05000669	Westhoughton South	395	5,602	70

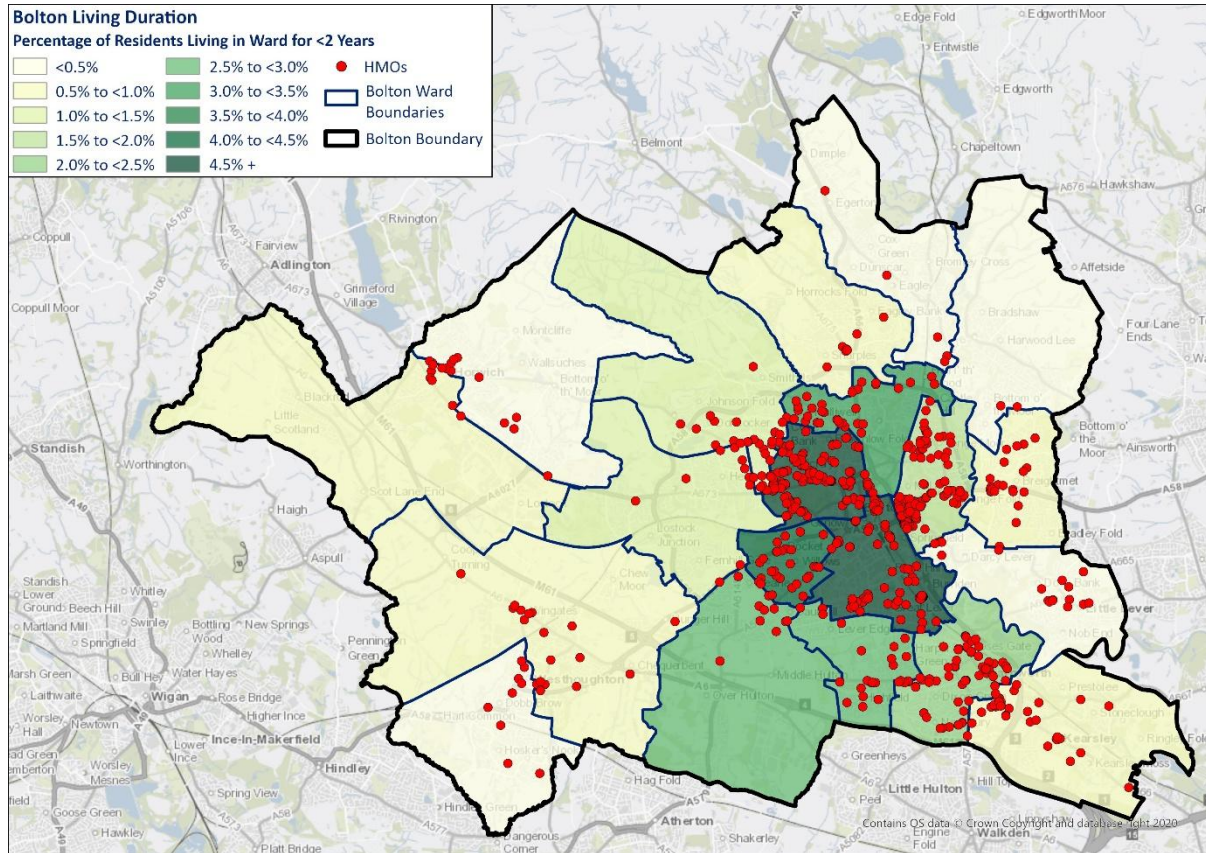
Data Sourced from DWP, StatXplore. This data shows the 2024 average housing benefit claimants.

Residents Living in a Ward for Less than 2 Years

The map shows the percentage of residents who have lived in their current ward for less than two years, alongside the recorded locations of HMOs across Bolton. It highlights that higher levels of population turnover are concentrated in a number of central and inner-urban wards, with these same areas also showing a dense clustering of HMOs. This spatial relationship indicates that areas with a higher concentration of HMOs tend to experience greater residential mobility, reflecting more frequent changes in occupancy.

While shorter lengths of residence do not in themselves indicate poor housing conditions, the pattern shown on the map is relevant to the Additional Licensing consultation as it highlights locations where managing occupancy, maintaining standards, and ensuring compliance can be more challenging. In such areas, Additional Licensing could support improved oversight of property management, more consistent standards, and clearer accountability where turnover is high.

Bolton Living Duration – Percentage of residents living in Ward for less than 2 years



Bolton Living Duration – Percentage of residents living in Ward for less than 2 years

Ward Code	Ward Name	All Residents	Residents Living in Ward for Less than 2 years (number)	Residents Living in Ward for Less than 2 years (percentage)
E05000650	Astley Bridge	14,141	107	0.8%
E05000651	Bradshaw	11,538	17	0.1%
E05000652	Breightmet	14,394	83	0.6%
E05000653	Bromley Cross	13,646	27	0.2%
E05000654	Crompton	17,583	604	3.4%
E05000655	Farnworth	16,572	375	2.3%
E05000656	Great Lever	18,100	1,080	6.0%
E05000657	Halliwel	16,265	820	5.0%
E05000658	Harper Green	16,203	445	2.7%
E05000659	Heaton and Lostock	13,821	161	1.2%
E05000661	Horwich North East	12,566	51	0.4%
E05000660	Horwich and Blackrod	14,686	90	0.6%
E05000662	Hulton	14,796	372	2.5%
E05000663	Kearsley	14,777	94	0.6%
E05000664	Little Lever and Darcy Lever	12,834	54	0.4%
E05000665	Rumworth	18,123	774	4.3%
E05000666	Smithills	14,927	204	1.4%
E05000667	Tonge with the Haulgh	13,515	261	1.9%
E05000668	Westhoughton North and Chew Moor	14,219	73	0.5%
E05000669	Westhoughton South	13,251	44	0.3%

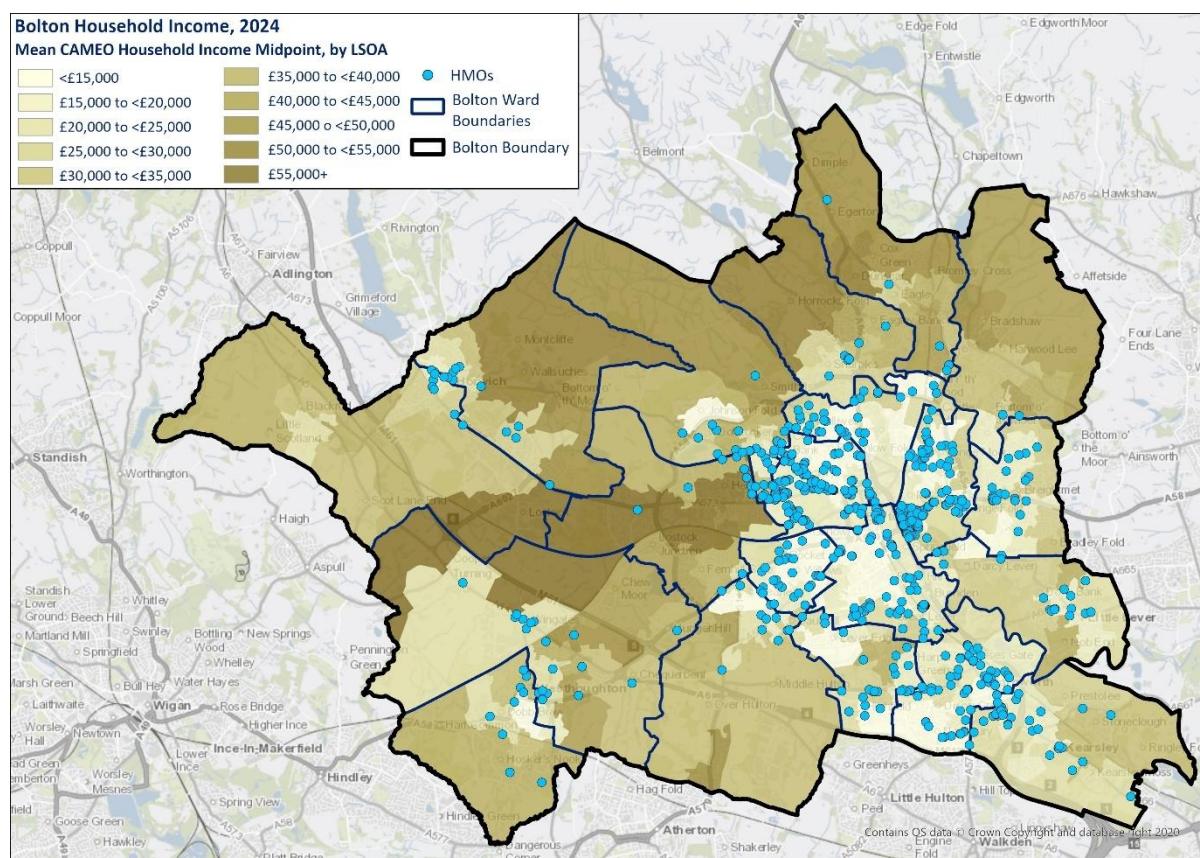
In order to protect against disclosure of personal information, records have been swapped between different geographic areas and counts perturbed by small amounts. Small counts at the lowest geographies will be most affected

Household Income

The map shows mean household income by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in 2024, alongside the recorded locations of HMOs across Bolton. It indicates that areas with lower average household incomes are predominantly concentrated in central and inner-urban parts of the borough, and these areas also show a higher concentration of HMOs. While lower income levels do not in themselves imply poor housing conditions, the spatial pattern suggests that HMOs are more prevalent in areas where household incomes are lower and affordability pressures are greater.

This evidence is relevant to the Additional Licensing consultation as it highlights locations where economic vulnerability, higher reliance on private rented accommodation, and more intensive use of housing stock coincide, and where Additional Licensing could support improved oversight, management standards, and compliance within the HMO sector.

Bolton Household Income 2024 – Mean CAMEO Household Income midpoint by LSOA



Source: CAMEO UK 2024 (licensed dataset).

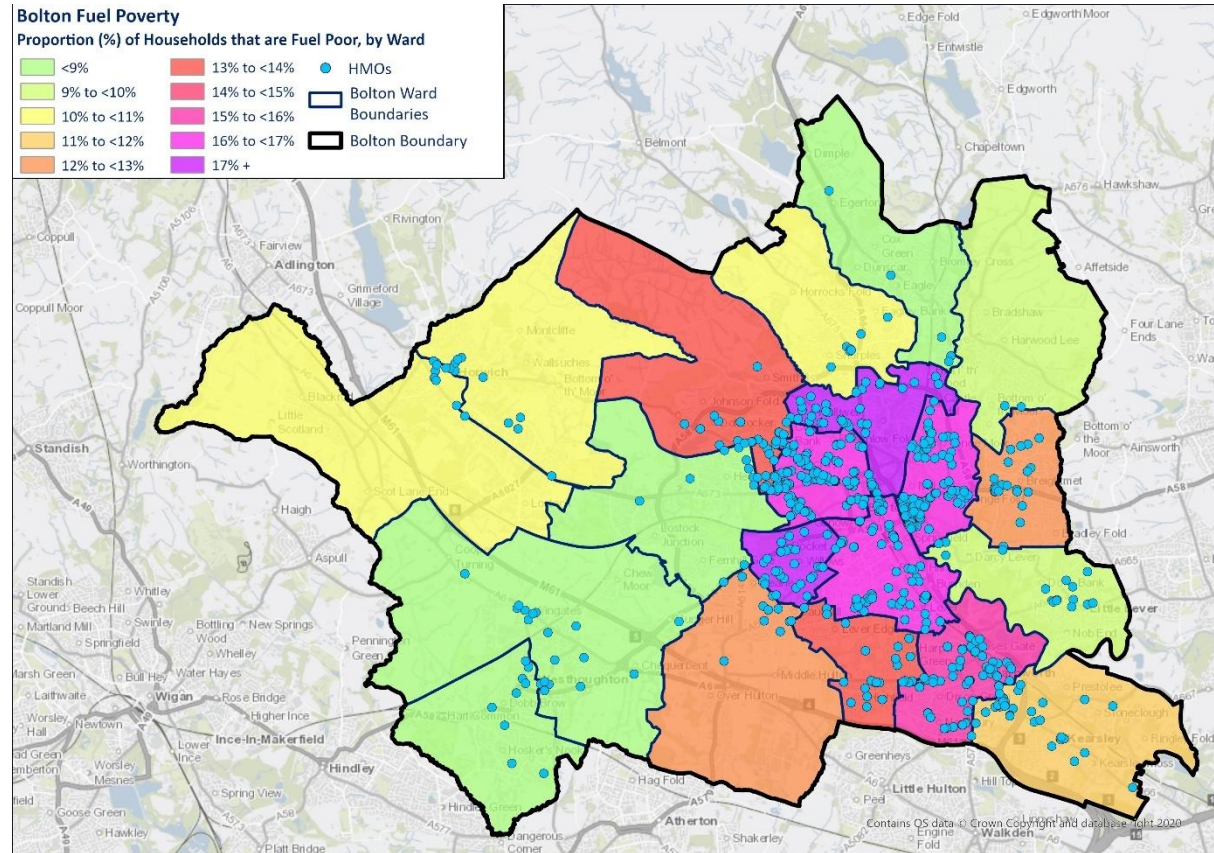
Data aggregated at LSOA level; raw data cannot be shared. Analysis conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics.

Fuel Poverty

The map shows the proportion of households experiencing fuel poverty by ward across Bolton, alongside the recorded locations of HMOs. It indicates that higher levels of fuel poverty are concentrated in a number of central and inner-urban wards, with several of these areas also showing a high concentration of HMOs. While fuel poverty is influenced by a range of factors, including income levels and energy efficiency, the spatial pattern highlights that HMOs are more prevalent in areas where households are more likely to experience difficulty meeting energy costs.

This evidence is relevant to the Additional Licensing consultation because it identifies locations where housing affordability pressures intersect with energy efficiency and property condition concerns, and where Additional Licensing could support improved management standards, compliance with safety and energy-related requirements, and better oversight of shared accommodation.

Bolton Fuel Poverty- Percentage of households that are fuel poor by ward



Bolton Fuel Poverty- Percentage of households that are fuel poor by ward

Ward Code	Ward (2022) Name	Number of households	Number of households in fuel poverty	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)
E05000650	Astley Bridge	5854	637	10.9%
E05000651	Bradshaw	5225	490	9.4%
E05000652	Brightmet	6637	818	12.3%
E05000653	Bromley Cross	5588	450	8.1%
E05000654	Crompton	6121	1042	17.0%
E05000655	Farnworth	7297	1129	15.5%
E05000656	Great Lever	6607	1067	16.1%
E05000657	Halliwell	6632	1123	16.9%
E05000658	Harper Green	5119	673	13.1%
E05000659	Heaton and Lostock	5055	377	7.5%
E05000660	Horwich and Blackrod	7027	742	10.6%
E05000661	Horwich North East	5989	618	10.3%
E05000662	Hulton	6323	799	12.6%
E05000663	Kearsley	6617	728	11.0%
E05000664	Little Lever and Darcy Lever	5512	522	9.5%
E05000665	Rumworth	5376	986	18.3%
E05000666	Smithills	6378	832	13.0%
E05000667	Tonge with the Haulgh	6960	1125	16.2%
E05000668	Westhoughton North and Chew Moor	6469	516	8.0%
E05000669	Westhoughton South	5622	457	8.1%

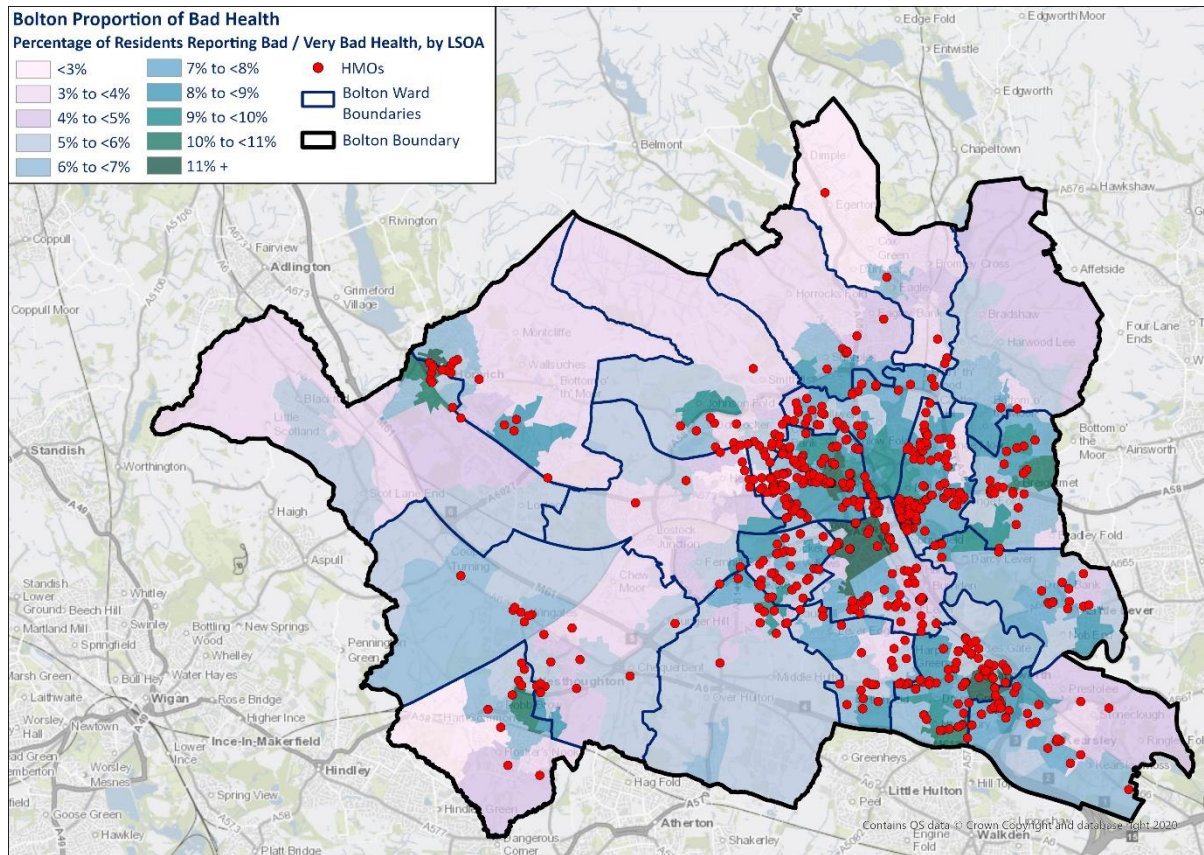
Data sourced from DESNZ, Sub-regional Fuel Poverty England 2024 (2022 data)

Poor Health

The map shows the percentage of residents reporting bad or very bad health at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level across Bolton, alongside the recorded locations of HMOs. It indicates that higher levels of poor health are concentrated in a number of central and inner-urban areas, with these same locations also showing a dense clustering of HMOs. While the presence of HMOs does not imply a causal relationship with health outcomes, the spatial pattern highlights that HMOs are more prevalent in areas where wider health inequalities already exist.

This is relevant to the Additional Licensing consultation because housing quality, safety, and management are recognised as important factors in supporting health and wellbeing. Additional Licensing could therefore help strengthen oversight of HMO standards, particularly in areas where residents may be more vulnerable to the impacts of poor housing conditions.

Bolton Proportion of Bad Health – percentage of residents reporting bad/very bad health by LSOA



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Census 2021 via Nomis (table TS037).
Extracted dataset was used to produce this map. Dataset information available at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/c2021ts037>

8. Proposed Scheme Design

Scope and Coverage

To improve standards and strengthen the management of smaller HMOs across the borough, the council is proposing to introduce an Additional Licensing Scheme that would apply to two specific types of property.

- The first category includes Section 254 small Houses in Multiple Occupation occupied by three or four people forming two or more separate households. These are properties where unrelated individuals share basic amenities such as a kitchen, bathroom, or toilet. Examples include shared houses or flats occupied by young professionals, students, or individuals on low incomes who live independently but share facilities. Although smaller HMOs can provide essential accommodation, they are not currently subject to mandatory licensing, meaning the council has limited ability to intervene where standards are poor or management is ineffective.
- The second category covered by the proposal is Section 257 HMOs, a term used in the Housing Act 2004 to describe buildings that have been converted into self-contained flats, but where the conversion did not meet the relevant building regulations at the time it was carried out and where less than two-thirds of the flats are owner-occupied. The appropriate building standards, as a minimum being the 1991 Building Regulations

These properties often present particular risks, such as poor fire compartmentation, inadequate fire detection systems, and outdated or unsafe layouts. In some cases, the condition or management of the building as a whole can place occupants at increased risk, even if individual flats appear self-contained. Bringing Section 257 HMOs into the licensing regime would allow the council to ensure that these buildings are properly assessed, managed, and maintained to modern safety and quality standards.

Summary of Licence Conditions

All properties licensed under the proposed Additional Licensing Scheme would be required to meet a clear set of licence conditions. These are designed to ensure that **HMOs are** safe, well-managed, and properly maintained, and that tenants and neighbouring residents are protected from poor standards or ineffective management. Full details of the conditions are set out in Appendix C.

Conditions applying to *all* licensed HMOs (Sections 254 and 257)

Regardless of property type, licence holders would be expected to meet a core set of requirements covering **management, safety, property condition, and tenant welfare**. In summary, these include:

- **Fit and proper management**
Licence holders and any managing agents must be fit and proper persons, notify the council of any relevant changes (such as convictions, enforcement

action, or changes in management arrangements), and undertake training if required.

- **Clear contact and management arrangements**

Up-to-date contact details for the licence holder or managing agent must be displayed in the property and provided to occupiers and neighbouring properties. Arrangements for dealing with repairs and emergencies must be clearly explained to tenants.

- **Good property condition and maintenance**

The whole building, including common parts, external areas, gardens and outbuildings, must be kept in good repair, clean, and free from hazards or pest infestations. Regular inspections must be carried out, and complaints investigated promptly.

- **Fire, gas and electrical safety**

Appropriate fire detection and alarm systems, emergency lighting (where required), fire risk assessments, gas safety certificates, electrical safety reports, and carbon monoxide alarms must be in place, kept up to date, and provided to the council on request.

- **Waste management and neighbourhood impact**

Adequate refuse and recycling facilities must be provided and managed in line with the council's waste collection arrangements, and licence holders must take reasonable steps to prevent nuisance or anti-social behaviour.

- **Tenancy management and tenant information**

Licence holders must act fairly and lawfully in relation to rents, deposits, inventories, right-to-rent checks, and tenancy agreements, and must respond to reasonable requests from the council and partner agencies.

These shared conditions reflect existing legal duties but provide the council with stronger oversight and enforcement powers where standards are not met

Conditions specific to Section 254 HMOs (shared houses and flats)

For smaller shared HMOs occupied by three or four people, additional conditions focus on how shared living space is used, including:

- **Room sizes and occupancy limits**, ensuring bedrooms are of an appropriate size for the number and age of occupants and are not overcrowded.
- **Amenity standards**, covering the provision and suitability of shared kitchens, bathrooms and toilets in line with Bolton Council's HMO Amenity Standards.
- **Management of shared facilities**, including cleaning arrangements and clear responsibilities for tenants.

These conditions help ensure that shared accommodation remains safe, comfortable and suitable for multiple unrelated occupants.

Conditions specific to Section 257 HMOs (converted blocks of flats)

For Section 257 HMOs, where risks often arise from the **building as a whole rather than individual flats**, licence conditions place particular emphasis on:

- **Fire safety across the entire building**, including fire compartmentation, shared fire detection systems connected to the landlord's supply, and management of common escape routes.
- **Building-wide safety and maintenance**, ensuring that conversions meet minimum safety expectations and that shared areas are properly managed and maintained.
- **Access to services**, including safe access to meters, consumer units and emergency controls for each flat.

These measures recognise the higher risks often associated with poorly converted buildings and ensure that landlords take responsibility for the safety and management of the whole structure

Proposed Property Standards

Alongside licensing, the council is proposing a set of minimum property standards that would apply to HMOs covered by the Additional Licensing Scheme. These standards are intended to ensure that shared housing in the borough provides safe, healthy and decent living conditions for residents, while recognising the different forms that HMOs can take.

At this stage, the standards are proposed only and are included as part of this consultation. Full technical detail is set out in Appendix C, but the key principles are summarised below.

Space and overcrowding

Adequate space is essential to residents' health, wellbeing and quality of life. The proposed standards therefore place strong emphasis on:

- Minimum bedroom sizes, which are higher than the national statutory minimum, to reduce overcrowding and improve living conditions
- Clear occupancy limits, linked to the size and layout of the property
- Separate communal or living space, particularly in shared houses, to allow residents to relax, socialise and eat away from their bedrooms

Rooms that are too small or poorly laid out would not be considered suitable for sleeping accommodation.

Kitchens, bathrooms and shared facilities

The standards set out expectations for the number, size and quality of shared amenities, reflecting the number of occupants in the property. Key requirements include:

- Adequate kitchen space, storage, appliances and work surfaces so residents can prepare food safely
- Sufficient bathrooms and toilets, properly located and accessible, with appropriate ventilation and heating
- Layouts that protect privacy, for example ensuring toilets do not open directly into kitchens

These requirements aim to reduce conflict, improve hygiene and support day-to-day living in shared homes.

Fire, gas and electrical safety

Safety is a central focus of the proposed standards. All licensed HMOs would be expected to meet clear requirements relating to:

- Fire safety, including appropriate fire detection and alarm systems, emergency lighting where required, and up-to-date fire risk assessments
- Gas and electrical safety, supported by valid certification and regular testing
- Carbon monoxide detection and safe placement of meters and consumer units

For Section 257 HMOs, particular emphasis is placed on building-wide fire safety and means of escape, recognising the risks often associated with poorly converted blocks of flats.

General condition and management of buildings

The proposed standards also require HMOs to be:

- Maintained in a good state of repair, both internally and externally
- Clean, safe and free from hazards in all common parts, including stairways, corridors and external areas
- Provided with suitable arrangements for waste storage and recycling, in line with council collection systems

These measures are designed to protect both residents and the wider neighbourhood. The council welcomes views on whether these proposed property standards strike the right balance between improving housing quality and remaining proportionate for landlords. Full details, including room size tables and amenity specifications, are provided in Appendix C

Fees

Proposed Additional HMO Licensing Fee

To administer and enforce the proposed Additional Licensing Scheme effectively, the council is proposing a standard licence fee of £1,211 per HMO covered by the scheme. Each licence would last for five years.

The council has the power to charge a licensing fee under Section 63(7) of the Housing Act 2004. The proposed fee has been set to recover the reasonable costs incurred by the council in carrying out its licensing functions. It does not constitute a tax or a penalty.

The fee has been developed in line with statutory guidance and recognised good practice, and reflects experience from other local authorities operating similar licensing schemes. In principle, the council should neither make a surplus nor a loss from the scheme. To ensure this, the fee and the assumptions used to calculate it will be reviewed annually.

Why a Licence Fee Is Needed

Licence fees are a necessary part of delivering the Additional Licensing Scheme. They enable the council to:

- process and assess licence applications, including validating documentation and ensuring all required information has been provided;
- carry out inspections and compliance activity, both at the point of application and during the life of the licence, to ensure properties meet required standards and licence conditions;
- maintain a public register of licensed HMOs, supporting transparency and enabling tenants, landlords and partner organisations to check the licensing status of properties;
- provide guidance and support to landlords and managing agents on safety, management and property condition requirements;
- monitor and enforce compliance where standards are not met.

The proposed fee reflects all costs associated with setting up, administering, monitoring and enforcing the Additional Licensing Scheme, ensuring that the scheme is self-financing if implemented.

To deliver the scheme effectively, the council is proposing to establish a dedicated team of five officers to focus specifically on Additional Licensing. This reflects the scale of the scheme and the fact that existing Housing Standards resources do not currently have sufficient capacity to absorb this work.

What the Fee Covers

The proposed £1,211 licence fee covers:

- initial application processing and administration, including checks, assessments and correspondence;
- inspection and enforcement activity linked to the licence, including risk-based inspections during the five-year licence period;
- ongoing management of the scheme, such as maintaining registers, responding to enquiries, and providing information to landlords and tenants.

Fee Structure and Payment

By law, the fee must be levied in two parts. Part A will be payable on submission of the application and will cover the cost of processing and the administration in determining the eligibility of the application. Should the application be refused or rejected by the council or withdrawn by the applicant this first Part A payment will not be refunded.

Part B will be payable once the application has been assessed and the decision is made to grant the licence. This will cover the administration, management, and enforcement of the licensing functions for the scheme. In the event that we decide to refuse a licence application, only the Part A fee will be payable.

The Fee is as follows:

Additional HMO Licensing Fee	Amount
Part A – Application fee (payable on submission)	£760
Part B – Fee payable on approval of licence	£451
Total licence fee	£1,211

This is an annual amount of £242.20 and a weekly amount of £4.66

Duration and Implementation

Licences are issued for a period not exceeding 5 years and are not transferable. All properties issued with a mandatory licence are inspected as part of the licensing process, however, for a new scheme such as that proposed for Bolton, it may not be possible to inspect all properties before issuing a licence given the number of properties in scope. In such circumstances, a license would be issued with the inspection to follow at least once during the licence period, in practice as soon possible.

Process for Applying for a Licence

All existing and future properties that fall within the additional licensing designation will require a license and therefore required to apply to the council for one

The Council is currently developing a new online licensing application process that will be used for both mandatory and any future additional HMO licensing scheme. Applications for HMO licences will be made online via the Council's website. In order to make an application you will need all the details about the property, licence holder and any manager. You will also be required to upload various certificates and documents and make payment.

The proposed licence holder will be required to submit a Basic Criminal Disclosure which has been obtained within three months prior to submitting an application, as part of the fit and proper persons check.

On submission these are then reviewed and checks undertaken to ensure:

- The house is suitable for occupation by the proposed number of people considering amenities, room sizes, and other standards.
- The proposed licence holder and/or agent is fit and proper and the most appropriate person to hold the licence.
- Satisfactory management arrangements are in place.

All licences are subject to conditions relating to the property, its occupation, and management.

9. Alternatives Considered

Bolton Council already operates a comprehensive range of measures to address poor property conditions and management within the Private Rented Sector. The Housing Standards Team investigates complaints, inspects properties using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), and takes enforcement action where landlords fail to comply with their legal responsibilities.

The following table outlines the main alternatives that have been considered and explains why they are not, by themselves, sufficient to tackle the scale of issues in Bolton's HMO sector.

The alternative options we have considered are summarised in the table below:

Alternative Measure Strengths and Weaknesses

Alternative Measure	Strengths	Weaknesses (in Bolton Context)
Use of Part 1 Housing Act 2004 powers (HHSRS inspections, Improvement Notices, Work in Default)	Enables the council to investigate housing conditions and require landlords to complete improvements where Category 1 or Category 2 hazards are identified. Allows follow-up enforcement, including carrying out works in default and cost recovery. Supports targeted intervention based on complaints and risk.	Relies on tenant complaints or reports — reactive rather than proactive. Does not require landlords to demonstrate proactive management or compliance before issues arise. Legal processes can be lengthy, particularly where appeals are lodged. Works in default are costly and resource-intensive; not all costs can be recovered.
Use of prosecutions and civil penalties for housing offences	Provides a financial and reputational deterrent for landlords who breach housing legislation. Bolton Council's enforcement policy allows the use of civil penalties up to £30,000 for serious or repeat offences. Demonstrates the council's commitment to protecting tenants.	Does not guarantee immediate improvements to property conditions. Resource-intensive and dependent on evidence thresholds and legal processes. Without licensing, there is no proactive oversight to prevent offences occurring in the first place. Enforcement capacity is focused on known problem properties rather than boroughwide prevention.
Voluntary accreditation schemes	Encourages responsible landlords to maintain high standards and participate in training. Can strengthen communication between landlords and the council.	Participation is voluntary — landlords with poor practices are least likely to engage. Low participation rates nationally (around 8%) limit overall impact. Accreditation does not create enforceable

Alternative Measure	Strengths	Weaknesses (in Bolton Context)
		management standards or monitoring mechanisms.
Improvement grants or loan schemes to upgrade sub-standard properties	Financial assistance can help landlords address serious hazards and improve living conditions. Can target specific neighbourhoods or property types.	Limited funding availability; improvement grants are rarely available and typically reserved for mandatory hazards or external funding bids. Grants often fund works that landlords are legally obliged to undertake themselves. Provides no ongoing regulation of management standards or tenancy conduct.
Use of ASB powers (Community Protection Notices, Noise or Waste Enforcement)	Enables the council to tackle noise, waste, or nuisance problems linked to individual tenants or properties. Supports neighbourhood management and community safety objectives.	Focuses on the behaviour of tenants rather than requiring landlords to manage properties responsibly. Does not create a consistent standard of property management or accountability for landlords. Enforcement is often reactive and case-by-case.

Each of the measures listed above contributes to improving private rented housing standards in Bolton. Collectively, they help deliver the council's Housing Standards Enforcement Policy, which seeks to:

- Protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of residents;
- Ensure landlords meet their legal obligations; and
- Maintain and improve housing conditions across all tenures.

However, these powers are largely reactive and do not provide a proactive, boroughwide mechanism to raise standards in the smaller HMO sector, which currently falls outside mandatory licensing.

Link to Bolton Council's Housing Standards enforcement page: [Housing Standards – Bolton Council](#)

Options Considered for Additional Licensing

Introducing an Additional HMO Licensing Scheme, alongside existing enforcement powers, would:

- Enable earlier identification of poorly managed properties;
- Ensure consistent minimum standards across all HMOs;
- Provide a preventative framework to reduce enforcement demand; and
- Support the council's goal of improving housing quality and protecting vulnerable tenants.

Accordingly, Bolton Council believes that a boroughwide Additional Licensing Scheme, used in combination with its established enforcement tools, is the most effective and proportionate approach to tackling poor housing conditions and management practices in HMOs across the borough.

In developing these proposals, the council has considered a range of options for improving the regulation and management of smaller HMOs in Bolton. The three principal options are set out below.

Option 1: Boroughwide Additional Licensing (Recommended)

Under this option, the council would introduce a boroughwide Additional Licensing Scheme covering all small HMOs (3-4 occupants) and Section 257 HMOs across Bolton. This approach offers the most comprehensive and consistent level of regulation, ensuring that all relevant properties—regardless of location—are subject to the same safety, management, and maintenance requirements.

A boroughwide scheme would bring significant benefits, including economies of scale in administering the scheme, improved coordination of enforcement activity, and a clearer regulatory framework for landlords, tenants, and local communities. Importantly, this option ensures that issues associated with smaller HMOs can be addressed wherever they occur in the borough, recognising that problems such as poor management, overcrowding, and safety hazards are not limited to a handful of neighbourhoods. For these reasons, this is the council's preferred option.

Option 2: Targeted Licensing in High-Concentration Areas

This option would involve introducing Additional Licensing only in specific wards where HMOs are currently most concentrated—such as Tonge with the Haulgh, Queens Park and Central, and Smithills. While targeted licensing could help improve conditions in these particular areas, it would leave a large proportion of HMOs—estimated at around 40%—outside the scope of regulation. Evidence shows that smaller HMOs are present across all wards in Bolton, and issues relating to poor standards and ineffective management are not restricted to high-concentration clusters.

A targeted approach also carries a risk of displacement, where landlords may choose to establish HMOs in areas without licensing requirements, potentially creating new concentrations over time. In addition, a limited geographic scheme is less efficient to operate, offering fewer economies of scale and potentially making it more difficult to deliver the scheme on a cost-neutral basis. For these reasons, while beneficial in some neighbourhoods, this option does not provide a comprehensive or sustainable solution.

Option 3: Do Nothing

Under this option, the council would continue to regulate only those HMOs that fall under the existing mandatory licensing regime (properties with five or more occupants forming two or more households). This would leave the majority of smaller HMOs—those with 3-4 occupants and most Section 257 properties—unregulated beyond general housing standards enforcement.

Choosing not to take action would significantly limit the council's ability to address known issues affecting smaller HMOs, including poor property conditions, inadequate fire safety measures, overcrowding, and ineffective management practices. This option would also fail to respond to the growing number of complaints from tenants, neighbours, and community representatives, and it would reduce the council's capacity to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents living in this part of the Private Rented Sector. For these reasons, the "do nothing" option is not considered appropriate.

10. Scheme Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Licensing forms a key part of Bolton Council's wider strategic approach to improving housing quality, strengthening neighbourhoods, and protecting residents' health and wellbeing. It complements the council's Corporate Plan priorities to create a safe, prosperous, and connected borough, where everyone has access to a decent home.

Bolton's housing market is under increasing pressure. The number of smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) has risen sharply in recent years, often in areas already experiencing higher levels of deprivation and environmental challenges. While many landlords manage their properties responsibly, a significant proportion of HMOs are poorly maintained or inadequately managed, putting tenants at risk and undermining community stability.

The council already undertakes extensive enforcement work through its Housing Standards Team, using the powers available under the Housing Act 2004. However, these powers are largely reactive and rely on tenants reporting issues. Licensing shifts the balance towards proactive regulation, requiring landlords to come forward, demonstrate they meet legal standards, and take ongoing responsibility for their properties.

The Additional HMO Licensing Scheme will allow the council to:

- Identify and engage all HMO landlords operating in Bolton;
- Ensure every licensable property meets minimum safety, management, and energy efficiency standards;
- Support responsible landlords to improve professionalism; and
- Focus enforcement resources on those who continue to operate outside the law.

By integrating licensing into its overall housing and neighbourhood strategy, the council can deliver sustainable improvements that contribute to the wider goals of safer, healthier, and more inclusive communities across the borough.

Scheme Objectives and Outcomes

Objective	Expected Outcomes
Improve management standards in HMO properties	Landlords actively manage their properties to meet legal standards or face robust enforcement. Absentee or non-compliant landlords are required to appoint accredited agents to ensure compliance. Prevention of overcrowding through clear occupancy controls and proactive monitoring. Growth in the number of accredited landlords, supporting a more professional Private Rented Sector (PRS). Residential letting and managing agents comply fully with consumer protection and letting regulations. Stronger engagement between landlords and the council. Responsible landlords receive guidance, training, and recognition; irresponsible landlords are compelled to improve or face enforcement.
Reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) and environmental nuisance associated with HMOs	Reduction in ASB incidents and environmental crimes (waste, noise, fly-tipping) linked to poorly managed HMOs. Improved communication and cooperation between landlords, tenants, and neighbourhood services. Cleaner, safer, and more stable neighbourhoods, supporting the council's "Safe and Clean Bolton" ambition. Improved public confidence in areas with high concentrations of HMOs.
Improve housing conditions and eliminate poor property standards	All licensed HMOs inspected and monitored for compliance with licence conditions. Category 1 and 2 hazards identified through HHSRS assessments are removed, including fire risks, damp, and excess cold. Improvement in the overall quality, energy efficiency, and safety of Bolton's housing stock, with all HMOs achieving at least EPC Band E (or exemption). Enhanced health and wellbeing outcomes for tenants, reducing the burden on health and social care services. Better data and intelligence on the PRS to inform strategic planning and targeted enforcement.

Objective	Expected Outcomes
<p>Increase tenant awareness of standards, rights, and responsibilities</p>	<p>Clear information for tenants on minimum housing standards and their rights under the licensing scheme, available through the council's website and partner networks. Creation of a dedicated tenant advice and support section, including signposting to local services such as debt, welfare, and energy advice. Increased tenant engagement and empowerment through collaboration with voluntary and community organisations. Tenants benefit from healthier, warmer homes, with potential savings on energy costs, helping to tackle fuel poverty.</p>

11. Strategic Alignment

Bolton Council's approach to housing regulation is not taken in isolation. The proposed Additional HMO Licensing Scheme forms a key part of the borough's wider strategic framework to improve housing quality, strengthen neighbourhoods, and protect residents' health and wellbeing.

Licensing supports and reinforces the council's broader ambitions to create a safe, fair, and sustainable borough as set out across several key plans and strategies. Each of these frameworks emphasises the importance of improving property standards, tackling inequality, reducing anti-social behaviour, and promoting sustainable growth. The proposed licensing scheme provides a practical and targeted mechanism to help deliver these ambitions by:

- Driving up housing quality and management standards in the Private Rented Sector (PRS);
- Supporting residents to live in safe, warm, and well-maintained homes;
- Reducing environmental and anti-social behaviour issues in neighbourhoods; and
- Ensuring Bolton contributes to wider Greater Manchester housing and climate goals.

The following sections outline how the proposed Additional HMO Licensing Scheme will complement and strengthen these strategic priorities — demonstrating how licensing works with, not apart from, the council's long-term vision for Bolton.

Bolton Council Plan 2025-2028

[Bolton Council Plan 2025-2028](#)

The Council Plan sets out the vision for a prosperous, safe, clean, and connected borough, underpinned by the principles of getting the basics right, fairness, and working together.

How the Proposals Support the Council Plan:

- **Safe and clean neighbourhoods:** Licensing requires landlords to maintain properties to legal safety and management standards, directly improving living conditions and neighbourhood environments.
- **Fairness and opportunity:** Protects vulnerable tenants and low-income households by ensuring safe, well-managed homes across the Private Rented Sector.
- **Efficient, responsible services:** Enables the council to target enforcement resources effectively, focusing on the highest-risk properties and landlords.
- **Partnership working:** Strengthens collaboration between the council, landlords, tenants, and community partners to improve standards and accountability.

Community Housing Service Plan 2024-26

The Community Housing Service Plan's vision is that every Bolton resident who needs one can access an accessible, affordable, sustainable, and high-quality home. The plan describes the role of Community Housing in preventing homelessness, supporting people to sustain their tenancies, improving housing standards in the Private Rented Sector, and protecting the most vulnerable from rough sleeping. It is structured around three strategic objectives: improving customer experience (clearer offers, earlier prevention, better use of data, and digital tools), improving strategy, coordination, and partner engagement (stronger governance, HMO framework, better use of resources, and commissioning), and investing in staff (capacity, culture, skills, and wellbeing). Across these themes, the plan emphasises prevention, partnership working, evidence-led decision-making, and a shift towards more proactive, trauma-informed, and customer-focused services.

How the Proposals Support the Community Housing Service Plan:

- By bringing smaller HMOs and Section 257 properties into a clear, consistent licensing framework, the council can give residents a more straightforward offer on standards and redress, reduce repeat presentations linked to poor housing conditions, and provide faster, more predictable responses to concerns about unsafe or badly managed shared housing.
- Additional licensing directly supports the plan's commitment to develop a robust HMO framework, improves the council's data on where HMOs are and who manages them, and aligns with the Article 4 Direction to create a joined-up planning and regulatory approach to HMOs across Bolton.
- By setting and enforcing minimum safety and management standards, licensing helps tackle disrepair, fire risks, and overcrowding in HMOs, reducing health hazards, homelessness risk, and the demand for crisis interventions, and supporting the shift towards prevention and early help.
- A self-financing licensing scheme provides a clearer mandate and tools and resources for Housing Standards and Community Housing staff, enabling more planned, intelligence-led enforcement and reducing the pressure of dealing repeatedly with the same high-risk, poorly managed properties.

Housing Strategy Interim to 2027

Bolton's interim Housing Strategy aims to increase the supply of affordable and social housing, create sustainable and inclusive neighbourhoods, enable independent living, prevent homelessness, and improve housing quality across all tenures. It provides a clear direction for meeting rising housing needs, tackling inequality, and ensuring homes are safe, sustainable, and well-managed.

How the Proposals Additional Licensing Helps:

- Raises housing standards by ensuring HMOs are better managed, safer, and free from hazards such as damp, mould, and overcrowding.
- Improves neighbourhood quality by reducing poorly managed HMOs that contribute to anti-social behaviour, waste issues, and declining amenity.

- Supports homelessness prevention by improving stability and conditions in lower cost rented homes, reducing tenancy failure and unsafe accommodation.
- Provides stronger oversight and data, enabling the council to identify issues early, target enforcement, and work proactively with landlords to improve property quality.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025

[Bolton Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025](#)

This strategy sets out the council's vision to prevent homelessness wherever possible, improve partnership working, and ensure people have access to safe, suitable accommodation. It highlights the PRS as an important part of the housing offer but acknowledges that poor standards and management can place residents at risk of homelessness.

How the Proposals Support the Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025:

- Improves the quality and management of Private Rented Sector (PRS) housing, which is critical for households at risk of homelessness due to poor conditions or insecure tenancies.
- Supports tenancy sustainment by ensuring HMOs meet safety and management standards, reducing the likelihood of breakdowns that lead to homelessness.
- Enables earlier intervention by identifying poorly managed HMOs, thus aligning with the Strategy's priority on prevention and enabling.
- Strengthens the move-on options for homeless households by improving PRS supply and quality, complementing the Strategy's focus on "move-on and sustainable outcomes".

Public Health Priorities (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment)

[Home – Bolton JSNA](#)

The JSNA is a statutory assessment of the health and wellbeing needs of Bolton's population, covering aspects such as housing, living environment, deprivation, and health inequalities. It shows that many homes and neighbourhoods in Bolton are affected by poor quality housing, cold or unsafe living conditions, and socio-economic barriers to good health.

How the Proposals Support Public Health Outcomes:

Licensing will help improve the quality and safety of privately rented homes (HMOs), addressing a root contributor to poorer health and wellbeing identified in the JSNA.

- By requiring landlords to manage and maintain HMOs to minimum standards, the scheme contributes to reducing hazards such as damp, excess cold, overcrowding, and fire risk—all factors the JSNA links to health inequalities.

- The proposal supports efforts to reduce neighbourhood-level deprivation by improving housing conditions, which the JSNA identifies as part of the “living environment” domain of deprivation.
- Bolton JSNA.
- Improved regulation and data from licensing will strengthen Bolton’s intelligence on housing outcomes, enabling more targeted health and housing interventions in line with the JSNA’s prevention-focused approach.

Community Safety Partnership Plan

[Community safety – Bolton Council](#)

The Community Safety Partnership Plan sets out how the council, Greater Manchester Police, GM Fire and Rescue Service, and local partners work together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). It emphasises prevention, early intervention, and community confidence.

How the Proposals Support Community Safety:

- By requiring landlords of HMOs to licence their properties and meet clear conditions (management, waste, occupancy, safety) the scheme supports the “Keep People Safe” priority by reducing risks in high-density rented stock.
- Licensing helps prevent & address ASB and nuisance (tied to weaker management in some HMOs) which aligns with “Reduce Harm and Offending” by removing some root causes of recurring issues in neighbourhoods.
- The scheme strengthens “Communities and Places” by improving neighbourhood amenity, reducing environmental nuisance, and increasing tenant confidence in their homes and surroundings.
- Licensing adds to data and intelligence on PRS housing which aids partnership working between Housing Standards, Community Safety, and police and fire services.
- Licence conditions can include requirements to manage tenant behaviour, liaise with community safety partners, and take proactive steps to keep properties well-managed which supports multi-agency collaboration.

Empty Homes Policy

[Empty residential properties – Bolton Council](#)

Bolton Council’s Empty Homes Policy aims to bring long-term vacant dwellings back into use, improve neighbourhood appearance, and increase available housing. The policy uses council tax premiums, enforcement, and partnership work to reduce blight and maximise housing supply.

How the Proposals Support the Empty Homes Policy:

- The licensing scheme will help identify vacant or under-used houses that are being converted into or let as HMOs, enabling the council to refer these properties into the empty-homes enforcement and support framework.

- Regular inspections and licence conditions create an incentive for landlords to bring homes back into use rather than let them remain vacant or poorly managed, thus increasing effective housing supply.
- The increased data on private rented HMOs generated through licensing strengthens the council's knowledge of stock condition and occupancy, supporting targeted action on empties and improving neighbourhood stability.
- Improved standards in HMO properties contribute to enhanced local environments, reducing blight, and improving resident confidence in regeneration and housing supply interventions.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

Bolton is a proud partner of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and fully supports its shared regional commitments to improving housing quality, affordability, and sustainability. The proposed Additional HMO Licensing Scheme aligns with these Greater Manchester priorities by helping to raise standards in the Private Rented Sector, promote safer and healthier homes, and contribute to the city region's wider ambitions for fair, inclusive, and low-carbon growth.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) sets the overarching vision for the city region through its [Greater Manchester Strategy—Our People, Our Place](#) – which aims to make Greater Manchester a fairer, greener, and more prosperous place where everyone has a good home in a thriving neighbourhood. Safe, decent housing is recognised as a foundation for better health, wellbeing, and inclusive economic growth.

The [GM Housing Strategy](#) translate this vision into practical commitments: improving housing quality and affordability, tackling poor conditions in the Private Rented Sector (PRS), and supporting energy-efficient, low-carbon homes to help achieve the region's goal of carbon neutrality by 2038.

Alongside these, the [GM Good Landlord Charter](#) - launched in 2024 - provides a city-region framework for promoting responsible landlord behaviour, celebrating good practice, and driving up standards across the PRS. The Charter encourages collaboration between landlords, tenants, and councils, setting clear expectations for management, property safety, and tenant welfare.

GMCA has also confirmed that licensing plays a key role in this approach. In its background documentation, GMCA commits to supporting local authorities in pursuing discretionary licensing schemes as an effective means to tackle poor housing conditions and ensure consistency of regulation across the ten Greater Manchester districts.

How the Proposals Support GMCA Priorities:

- **Improves housing quality and management:** Raises standards across Bolton's PRS in line with GMCA's commitment to ensure everyone lives in a safe, decent, and well-managed home.
- **Supports regional carbon and retrofit goals:** Enforces minimum energy efficiency standards (EPC Band E or above) and encourages investment in energy improvements that align with GMCA's low-carbon housing priorities.

- **Aligns with the Good Landlord Charter:** Creates a consistent, enforceable baseline for responsible management, complementing the Charter's voluntary framework for excellence in landlord practice.
- **Enables regional consistency in regulation:** Ensures Bolton Council's approach to additional licensing contributes to a coherent Greater Manchester system for monitoring and improving the Private Rented Sector.
- **Promotes fairness and inclusion:** Protects vulnerable tenants, supports safer neighbourhoods, and enhances housing security—delivering GMCA's ambition for a fairer and more inclusive city region.

12. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Considerations

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed to consider how the proposed boroughwide Additional HMO Licensing Scheme could affect people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and other groups who may be vulnerable. Overall, the EqIA finds that the scheme is expected to have a positive equality impact, because it strengthens oversight of property condition and management standards in a part of the Private Rented Sector that is more likely to house people on lower incomes and those who may be at greater risk from unsafe or poorly managed accommodation.

Key Findings

The EqIA identifies the following likely impacts:

- **Positive impacts for tenants who are more likely to live in HMOs**, including younger adults, people on low incomes, people in receipt of benefits, and those in insecure housing circumstances. Improved compliance with fire, electrical, and management standards is expected to reduce exposure to hazards and improve safety and wellbeing.
- **Positive impacts for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions**, who can be disproportionately affected by poor housing conditions (e.g., damp, excess cold, trip hazards, unsafe layouts) and may face barriers to complaining or moving home.
- **Positive impacts for some ethnic minority communities, migrants, and people with limited English**, who may be over-represented in the lower-cost Private Rented Sector in some areas and may face greater risks where accommodation is overcrowded or poorly managed.
- **Potential negative impacts where costs are passed on**, including the possibility that some landlords may seek to recover licensing and compliance costs through rent increases, which could disproportionately affect **low-income households**, single people, and those relying on benefits.
- **Potential risk of reduced supply or displacement**, if some landlords choose to exit the market or change how properties are let. Any reduction in lower-cost shared accommodation could disproportionately affect groups who rely on it, including younger single people and those at risk of homelessness.
- **Impacts on small-scale landlords and agents**, particularly those with limited capacity to manage compliance, where application requirements and costs may create administrative or financial pressures.

Mitigation Actions

To reduce the risk of disproportionate impacts and ensure the scheme is fair and accessible, the council will implement the following mitigation measures:

1) Fair and accessible consultation and communications

- Provide information in plain English, with accessible formats available on request (large print, easy read, alternative languages where needed).

- Use multiple channels to reach tenants and communities who may not engage online (community venues, targeted partner networks, in-person/virtual sessions).

2) Support to promote compliance (especially for smaller landlords)

- Publish clear guidance on licence requirements, minimum standards, and how to apply.
- Offer advice and signposting to training/accreditation and practical support to help landlords meet standards efficiently.
- Use a proportionate approach to timescales for submitting documentation, where appropriate, without compromising safety.

3) Proportionate and intelligence-led enforcement

- Prioritise enforcement activity based on risk (e.g., fire safety, overcrowding, serious hazards), focusing resources where tenant safety concerns are greatest.
- Apply a consistent approach to decision-making to minimise the risk of unintended discrimination.

4) Protecting tenants and reducing displacement risk

- Work with homelessness prevention and advice services to monitor any emerging risks (e.g., retaliatory eviction concerns, sudden loss of shared accommodation).
- Ensure tenants know how to report concerns and access support, including signposting to housing advice and community safety partners.

5) Monitoring and review

- Monitor scheme implementation data (e.g., complaints, enforcement outcomes, geographic patterns, and any evidence of rent pressures or displacement) and review mitigation actions if unintended impacts are identified.
- Use feedback from tenants, landlords, partners, and community groups to refine guidance and engagement over time.

Conclusion

The EqIA concludes that Additional Licensing is likely to deliver net positive impacts, particularly for groups more likely to live in HMOs, by improving safety, management standards, and accountability. The mitigations above will help ensure the scheme is implemented in a way that is proportionate, accessible, and responsive to any unintended adverse effects.

13. How to Have Your Say

Bolton Council is inviting feedback from residents, tenants, landlords, letting/managing agents, businesses, and partner organisations on the proposed Additional HMO Licensing Scheme. You can respond in any of the following ways:



Complete the Online Survey

- Online survey: <https://app.keysurvey.co.uk/f/41831381/1413/>
- Scan the QR code to take part:



Email Your Comments

- Email: Consultations@bolton.gov.uk

Please include “Additional HMO Licensing Consultation” in the subject line.



Respond by Post

Send written responses to:

Housing Standards Team
Bolton Council
2nd Floor, Castle Hill Centre
Castleton Street, Bolton
BL2 2JW



Call the Consultation Line

- Freephone: 08001223918
- Opening hours: 24 hours per day/ 7 days per week

(You can request paper copies, ask questions, or get help completing the survey). Calls will be returned within 2 working days



Attend a Drop-in or Virtual Session

You can also speak to officers and ask questions at one of the sessions below:

In-person drop-in sessions (no appointment needed):

- Monday, 23rd March 12pm to 7pm - The Hub at Westhoughton, Central Drive, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3DS
- Monday, 9th March 12pm to 7pm - The Bridge Church, Bolton, 109 Bradford Street, Bolton, BL2 1JX
- Tuesday, 31st March 12pm to 5.50pm - The Hub, 100 Shepherds Cross Street, Bolton BL1 3BS

Virtual sessions (booking required):

- Wednesday, 11th March 11am to 12pm – for residents
- Thursday, 12th March 6.30pm to 7.30pm – for residents
- Wednesday, 18th March 11am to 12pm – for Landlords and managing agents
- Wednesday, 18th March 6.30pm to 7.30pm - for Landlords and managing agents
- Thursday, 19th March 6.30pm to 7.30pm - Businesses and Voluntary Sectors

To book onto any of these session either call the freephone number on 08001223918 and ask for Lynne Shaw or email to book contact lynne.shaw@arc4.co.uk



Consultation Period

- The consultation will run from 2nd February 12pm until Sunday 19th April 11.59pm
- All feedback received during the consultation period will be reviewed and will help inform the council's final decision on whether to introduce Additional HMO Licensing in Bolton.

14. Next Steps

Once the consultation closes, Bolton Council will follow a clear and transparent process to consider all feedback received and determine next steps.

Analysis of Consultation Responses

All responses submitted through the online survey, email, post, and engagement events will be collated and analysed. The council will consider the views of tenants, landlords, residents, businesses, and partner organisations to identify key themes, levels of support, and any alternative suggestions.

Publication of a Consultation Report

A full Consultation Report will be prepared and published on the council's website. This will summarise the consultation process, headline findings, key issues raised, and the council's response to the feedback received.

Decision-Making

The Consultation Report and supporting evidence will be presented to the Executive Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing, who will consider whether to approve the introduction of a boroughwide Additional HMO Licensing Scheme, and on what terms.

Expected Implementation

If approved, the council anticipates that the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme would be introduced in the second half of 2026. This would allow time for advance notice to landlords, preparation of systems and guidance, and clear communication with tenants and partners before the scheme comes into effect.

Further updates will be provided on the council's website as the proposals progress.

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Key Legislation

Under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004, local authorities have powers to regulate the management and condition of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) through licensing schemes. There are three types of licensing available:

- Mandatory Licensing, which applies to larger HMOs occupied by five or more people forming two or more households.
- Additional Licensing, which local authorities may designate to include smaller HMOs that fall outside the mandatory definition.
- Selective Licensing, which applies to single-family rented homes in defined areas.

Section 56 of the Housing Act 2004 allows a local authority to introduce an Additional Licensing Scheme covering either the whole of its district or a defined area within it, where the authority is satisfied that a significant proportion of HMOs are being managed ineffectively and are giving rise to one or more problems affecting the occupants or the wider community.

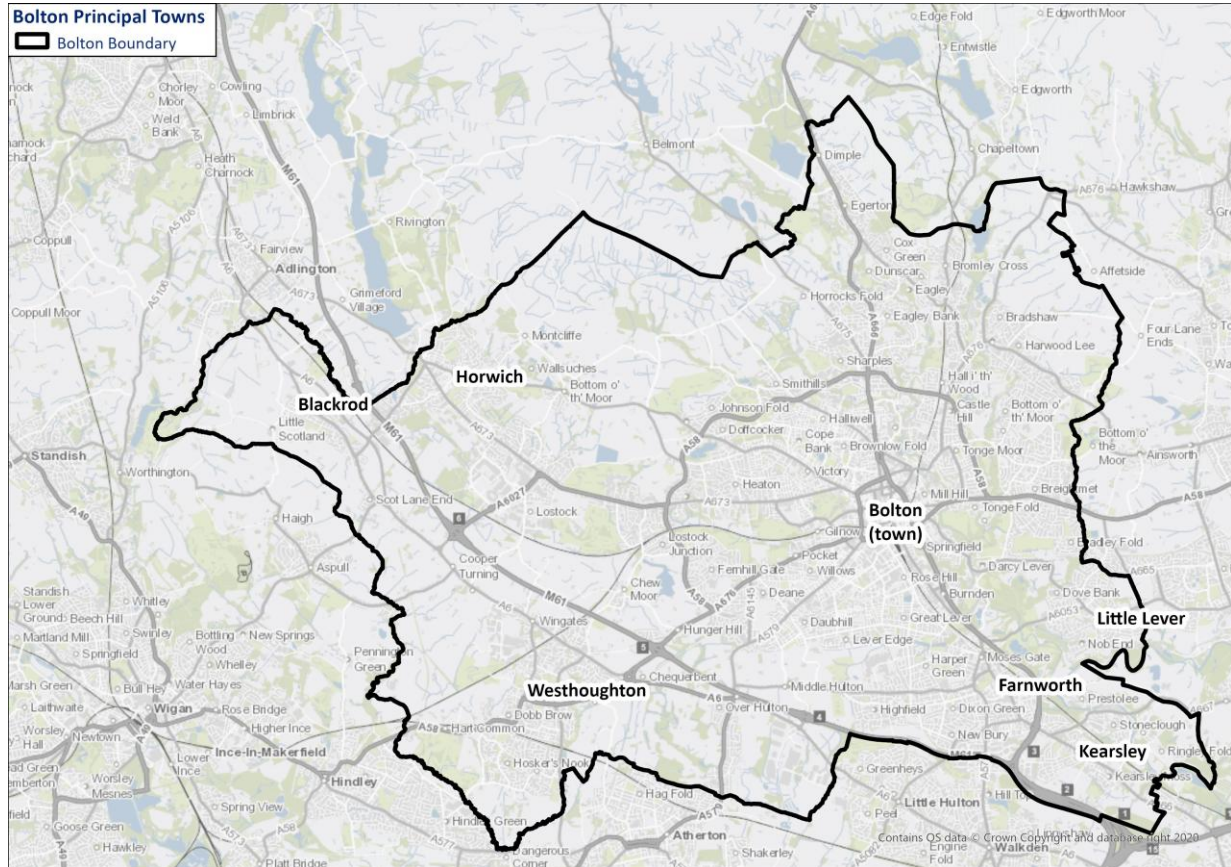
Before any designation can be made, the law requires the council to:

- Undertake a formal public consultation lasting at least ten weeks;
- Take reasonable steps to consult with all persons likely to be affected by the proposals, including residents, tenants, landlords, managing agents, local businesses, and partner organisations; and
- Consider and respond to all representations made during the consultation before making a final decision.

These statutory requirements are designed to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability in the decision-making process.

Appendix B: Map of Proposed Licensing Area

The Licensing area includes the entire district of Bolton



Appendix C: Full Draft Licence Conditions and Property Standards

Bolton Council - House in Multiple Occupation Licence Conditions

The licence holder must adhere to the following licence conditions. These conditions will be monitored by Bolton Council, and inspections will be carried out to ensure these are being complied with during the period of the licence.

Failure to adhere to one or more of these licence conditions could result in formal proceedings against you, with an unlimited fine, a civil penalty and/or the loss of your licence.

Prescribed Conditions relating to occupancy

The maximum occupancy limit per room based on the amenities provided shall be as follows and must not be exceeded:

Floor	Room	Maximum Occupancy

Mandatory Conditions relating to management

1. The licence holder must ensure that the property is compliant with Bolton Council's HMO Amenity standards.
2. The licence holder must ensure that the property has planning permission and building regulation completion certificate (where applicable), failure to provide evidence may result in the licence being refused, or issued for one year in length.
3. A copy of the licence including the attached conditions should be displayed within the common parts of the premises, and visible to all occupiers.
4. The Licence Holder must provide the occupiers of the property and the occupiers of any adjoining properties, with details of the following:

Name of the licence holder or managing agent

- A contact address, daytime telephone number
- An emergency contact telephone number.

This information must be supplied within 28 days of receipt of the licence document and should be clearly displayed in a prominent position within the property.

5. The Licence Holder and his managing agent must inform Housing Standards within 14 days of any changes in their circumstances as follows:
 - a. Details of any unspent* convictions not previously disclosed to the Local Authority, that may be relevant to the licence holder and/or the property manager and their fit and proper person status and in particular any such conviction in respect of any offence involving fraud or dishonesty, or violence or drugs or any offence listed in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

*The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 enables some criminal convictions to become 'spent', or ignored, after a 'rehabilitation period'. A rehabilitation period is a set length of time from the date of conviction. After this period, with certain exceptions, an ex-offender is not normally obliged to mention the conviction when applying for a job or obtaining insurance, or when involved in criminal or civil proceedings.

- b. Details of any finding by a court or tribunal against the licence holder and /or the manager that he/she has practiced unlawful discrimination on grounds of sex, colour, race, ethnic or national origin or disability in, or in connection with, the carrying on of any business.
 - c. Details of any contravention on the part of the licence holder or manager of any provision of any enactment relating to housing, public health, environmental health or landlord and tenant law which led to civil or criminal proceedings resulting in a judgment or finding being made against him/her.

- d. Information about any property the licence holder or manager owns or manages or has owned or managed which has been the subject of:
 - A control order under section 379 of the Housing Act 1985 in the five years preceding the date of the application; or
 - Any appropriate enforcement action described in section 5(2) of the Act
 - e. Information about any property the proposed licence holder or manager owns or manages or has owned or managed for which a local housing authority has refused to grant a licence under Part 2 or 3 of the Act, or has revoked a licence in consequence of the licence holder breaching the conditions of his/her licence
 - f. Information about any property the proposed licence holder or manager owns or manages or has owned or managed that has been the subject of an interim or final management order under the Housing Act 2004.
 - g. Change of name and address to Licence Holder or Landlord
 - h. The undertaking of any substantial works to the property including conversions and modernisations.
6. The licence holder must ensure that any persons who assist in the management of the property not detailed within the original application form must be fit and proper persons and must notify Housing Standards of these changes. Where necessary Housing Standards will require a declaration to be signed by the person assisting in the management of the property that they meet the fit and proper criteria.
7. If any new leasing agreements are put in place, for example rent to rent, Housing Standards must be notified with completion of the relevant section of the application form. The licence holder will remain responsible for complying with the licence conditions and must ensure that they hold details for the tenants (under the lease agreement) and that all relevant checks have been completed.
8. The licence holder and/or his nominated managing agent shall undertake training courses as required by Housing Standards.
9. The licence holder must inform Housing Standards of any steps being taken to sell the property including the details of any successful purchaser(s) and ensure Land Registry Records are updated.
10. The Licence Holder must act lawfully and reasonably in requiring any advanced payments from occupiers; in handling rents; in returning deposits; and in making deductions from deposits. The Licence Holder will provide any occupier/prospective occupier with the following information:
- The amount of rent payable;
 - The details of any deposit required;

- Details of what the deposit covers and arrangements for return, details of the tenancy deposit scheme;
 - The frequency of such payments;
 - The details of any utilities or other charges included in the rent;
 - The responsibility for notifying Council Tax that the property is a HMO and for payment of the applicable Council Tax charge;
 - The responsibility for payment of utilities and arranging provision of such.
11. When gas and electricity are supplied through pre-payment meters, tokens and cards must be readily available from a local source at the price set by the utility provider.
12. When the tenant “checks in” a detailed inventory must be completed by the licence holder. The inventory will be initialled on all pages by both parties, signed and dated by them on the last page. A copy should be provided to the tenant, and the licence holder should retain a copy for his own records. The above procedure must be repeated for “check out” inventory at the end of tenancy.
- Note: Inventory covers items included within the tenancy and the condition of the property.
13. The licence holder will provide clear information to the tenants of their responsibilities for the condition of the property and payment of any utility bills at the end of the tenancy.

Mandatory Conditions relating to property

14. The licence holder shall ensure that occupants of the house receive written confirmation detailing arrangements in place to deal with repair issues and emergencies should they arise.
15. The Licence Holder and/or manager must ensure that the property is inspected at regular intervals, of at least once every month, to ensure that the conditions of the tenancy agreement are being adhered too. Should the Licence Holder receive a complaint about the property or tenancy, the Licence Holder and/or his manager must ensure that the property is inspected to investigate such complaint.
16. The licence holder shall ensure that the interior and exterior of the property is maintained in a reasonable decorative order and in a good state of repair.
17. The licence holder must ensure that all outbuildings, yards, forecourts and gardens surrounding the property are maintained, in repair and kept in a clean, tidy and safe condition and free from pest infestations.
18. Where major works are required during the period of the tenancy, the licence holder will provide suitable alternative accommodation for the period during which works are carried out.

19. The licence holder/manager will make arrangements for the regular cleaning of all common parts and shared facilities and ensure the cleaning of these areas takes place.
20. The licence holder must comply with the household waste collection and disposal system operated by Bolton Council. This includes ensuring an appropriate number of bins are provided for the size of the household, including for recycling. A suitable storage area must be provided for the bins and any excess waste must not be allowed to accumulate at the property. The licence holder shall ensure that all refuse containers are returned within the curtilage of the property on the same day that they are emptied by the Council. At the start of the tenancy the tenants must be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the storage and presentation of the household waste whilst waiting for collection, to include the understanding of recycling and bin collection cycles.
21. The licence holder/manager must notify Housing Standards Council of any fires that have occurred at the premises within 24 hours (or the next working day i.e. Monday if fire occurred on a Friday evening or Saturday).

The licence holder must:

- Produce to Housing Standards within 14 days of demand, a Fire Detection & Alarm System Certificate (in accordance with BS 5839) obtained in respect of the house within the last 12 months, and every 6 months if a Grade A system has been installed.
 - Produce to Housing Standards within 14 days of demand, an Emergency Lighting test certificate obtained within the last 12 months.
 - Ensure said certificates are retained for a period of 5 years.
 - Provide a current Fire Risk Assessment to Housing Standards and adhere to all requirements within the assessment.
22. The licence holder must provide, if gas is supplied to the property, a satisfactory Gas Safe Record to Housing Standards. The Gas Safe Record recommendations must be completed within 3 months from the date of the record. The Record will indicate the presence of carbon monoxide detectors.

The licence holder must:

- Ensure that a carbon monoxide alarm is installed in any room in the house which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance;
 - Keep each such alarm in proper working order; and
 - Supply the authority, on demand, with a declaration by him as to the condition and positioning of such alarms.
23. The licence holder must supply the Council with an electrical installation condition report (EICR) for the whole of the electrical installation in accordance with current IET wiring regulations. Such a report should be provided by a suitably trained, experienced and competent person e.g. NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT member. The report must state that the installation is in a 'Satisfactory' condition. The document

must be dated within the last five years. You must hold a current, satisfactory electrical installation condition report throughout the duration of the HMO Licence. Should any remedial works be recommended on the periodic electrical survey report, the Licence Holder must ensure that such works are completed no later than 12 months following the date of the report and must inform Housing Standards upon completion of such works.

24. If accommodation within the house is provided on a furnished basis and includes electrical appliances, the Licence Holder must produce to Housing Standards, for their inspection a portable appliance test (PAT) certificate within the first twelve months of the licence period, and yearly after.
25. The Licence Holder will ensure that any furniture/furnishings/floor covering provided is in safe and good condition and maintained or replaced as far as it is the Licence Holder's responsibility throughout the tenancy.
26. Where any works are to be carried to the property, the licence holder must ensure the appropriate Building Regulation consent and/or planning permission is obtained prior to works commencing.

Mandatory Conditions relating to security

27. Where window locks are fitted, the Licence Holder will ensure that keys are provided to the relevant occupant.
28. Where previous tenants have not surrendered keys, the licence holder will arrange for a lock change to be undertaken, prior to new tenants moving in.
29. The licence holder must obtain references and right to rent checks for persons who wish to occupy the house and supply evidence of these to Bolton Council on demand.
30. The licence holder will respond to reference requests within reasonable timescales and provide an honest and accurate reference relating to existing or past tenants.
31. Where there are alley-gates installed to the rear of the licensed property, the Licence Holder must take responsibility for holding a key for any alley-gates which are in place, or which are installed. Ensure that all new tenants are advised of the need to keep the alley gates locked.

Mandatory Conditions relating to complaints, requests and anti-social behaviour

32. The licence holder must respond as required to any written requests made by Bolton Council, Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service or other relevant partner (this includes requests for information including requests for personal information made under the Data Protection Act 2018) and attendance at meetings relating to the management of their property.

33. The licence holder must ensure that all new tenancy agreements include a clause covering anti-social behaviour, as provided with the licence application.
34. The Licence Holder must take all reasonability and all practicable steps for preventing and dealing effectively with anti-social behaviour. The Licence Holder and/or his manager are required to undertake an incremental process of investigation of any complaints, which have been made either directly to them, or via the Local Authority, regarding their occupiers.
35. For the purposes of these conditions, anti-social behaviour is taken to comprise behaviour by the occupants of the house and/or their visitors, which causes a nuisance or annoyance to other occupants of the house, to lawful visitors to the house or to persons residing in or lawfully visiting the locality of the house.
36. On request, the licence holder must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that they have properly managed the property and have taken all reasonable and practicable steps when dealing with complaints of anti-social behaviour and/or harassment made against the occupants. Examples of action which should be taken by the licence holder include the issuing warnings, both verbal and in writing.
37. The licence holder where directed by Bolton Council or Greater Manchester Police, and with their support, must take prompt action that is within their power to terminate a tenancy to prevent anti-social behaviour and nuisance.

Additional licence conditions (if required)

Prescribed Conditions

There is a legislative requirement under The Housing Act 2004 schedule 4 to include Prescribed Conditions as specified in the schedule. The Prescribed Conditions are also embedded within the aforementioned mandatory conditions. However Prescribed condition 6 a have been amended by Bolton Council and details are provided with the HMO Amenity Standards, which must be complied with.

1. If gas is supplied to the house, produce to the local housing authority annually for their inspection, a gas safety certificate obtained in respect of the house within the last 12 months.
2. The licence holder must:
 - a. keep electrical appliances and furniture made available by him in the house in a safe condition.
 - b. to supply the authority, on demand, with a declaration by him as to the safety of such appliances and furniture
 - c. to ensure that every electrical installation in the house is in proper working order and safe for continued use; and to supply the authority, on demand, with a declaration by him as to the safety of such installations.
3. The licence holder must:
 - a. Ensure that a smoke alarm is installed on each storey of the house on which there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation; and
 - b. Keep each such alarm in proper working order; and
 - c. Supply the authority, on demand, with a declaration by him as to the condition and positioning of such alarms
4. The licence holder must:
 - a. Ensure that a carbon monoxide alarm is installed in any room in the house which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and contains a fixed combustion appliance;
 - b. Keep each such alarm in proper working order; and
 - c. Supply the authority, on demand, with a declaration by him as to the condition and positioning of such alarms.
5. Supply the occupiers of the house a written statement of the terms under which they occupy it
6. The licence holder must:
 - a) ensure that the floor area of any room in the HMO used as sleeping accommodation by one person
 - b) aged over 10 years is not less than 6.51 square metres

- c) ensure that the floor area of any room in the HMO used as sleeping accommodation by two persons aged over 10 years is not less than 10.22 square metres
- d) ensure that the floor area of any room in the HMO used as sleeping accommodation by one person aged under 10 years is not less than 4.64 square metres
- e) ensure that any room in the HMO with a floor area of less than 4.64 square metres is not used as sleeping accommodation.

7. The licence holder must ensure that:

- a) Where any room in the HMO is used as sleeping accommodation by persons aged over 10 years only, it is not used as such by more than the maximum number of persons aged over 10 years specified in the licence.
- b) Where any room in the HMO is used as sleeping accommodation by persons aged under 10 years only, it is not used as such by more than the maximum number of persons aged under 10 years specified in the licence.
- c) Where any room in the HMO is used as sleeping accommodation by persons aged over 10 years and persons aged under 10 years, it is not used as such by more than the maximum number of persons aged over 10 years specified in the licence and the maximum number of persons aged under 10 years so specified.

8. The licence holder must comply with the household waste collection and disposal system operated by Bolton Council. This includes ensuring an appropriate number of bins are provided for the size of the household, including for recycling. A suitable storage area must be provided for the bins, and any excess waste must not be allowed to accumulate at the property pending collection.

Bolton Council - House in Multiple Occupation Licence Conditions (self-contained flats)

The licence holder must adhere to the following licence conditions. These conditions will be monitored by Bolton Council, and inspections will be carried out to ensure these are being complied with during the period of the licence.

Failure to adhere to one or more of these licence conditions could result in formal proceedings against you, with an unlimited fine, a civil penalty and/or the loss of your licence.

Prescribed Conditions relating to occupancy

The maximum occupancy limit per room based on the amenities provided shall be as follows and must not be exceeded:

Floor	Room	Maximum Occupancy

Mandatory Conditions relating to management

1. The licence holder must ensure that the property is compliant with Bolton Council's HMO Amenity standards.
2. The licence holder must ensure that the property has planning permission and building regulation completion certificate (where applicable), failure to provide evidence may result in the licence being refused, or issued for one year in length.
3. A copy of the licence including the attached conditions should be displayed within the common parts of the premises, and visible to all occupiers.
4. The Licence Holder must provide the occupiers of the property and the occupiers of any adjoining properties, with details of the following:

Name of the licence holder or managing agent

- A contact address, daytime telephone number
- An emergency contact telephone number.

This information must be supplied within 28 days of receipt of the licence document and should be clearly displayed in a prominent position within the property.

5. The Licence Holder and his managing agent must inform Housing Standards within 14 days of any changes in their circumstances as follows:
 - a. Details of any unspent* convictions not previously disclosed to the Local Authority, that may be relevant to the licence holder and/or the property manager and their fit and proper person status and In particular any such conviction in respect of any offence involving fraud or dishonesty, or violence or drugs or any offence listed in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

*The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 enables some criminal convictions to become 'spent', or ignored, after a 'rehabilitation period'. A rehabilitation period is a set length of time from the date of conviction. After this period, with certain exceptions, an ex-offender is not normally obliged to mention the conviction when applying for a job or obtaining insurance, or when involved in criminal or civil proceedings.
 - b. Details of any finding by a court or tribunal against the licence holder and /or the manager that he/she has practiced unlawful discrimination on grounds of sex, colour, race, ethnic or national origin or disability in, or in connection with, the carrying on of any business.
 - c. Details of any contravention on the part of the licence holder or manager of any provision of any enactment relating to housing, public health, environmental health or landlord and tenant law which led to civil or criminal proceedings resulting in a judgment or finding being made against him/her.

- d. Information about any property the licence holder or manager owns or manages or has owned or managed which has been the subject of:
- A control order under section 379 of the Housing Act 1985 in the five years preceding the date of the application; or
 - Any appropriate enforcement action described in section 5(2) of the Act
- e. Information about any property the proposed licence holder or manager owns or manages or has owned or managed for which a local housing authority has refused to grant a licence under Part 2 or 3 of the Act, or has revoked a licence in consequence of the licence holder breaching the conditions of his/her licence
- f. Information about any property the proposed licence holder or manager owns or manages or has owned or managed that has been the subject of an interim or final management order under the Housing Act 2004.
- g. Change of name and address to Licence Holder or Landlord
- h. The undertaking of any substantial works to the property including conversions and modernisations.
6. The licence holder must ensure that any persons who assist in the management of the property not detailed within the original application form must be fit and proper person. and must notify Housing Standards of these changes. Where necessary Housing Standards will require a declaration to be signed by the person assisting in the management of the property that they meet the fit and proper criteria.
7. If any new leasing agreements are put in place, for example rent to rent, Housing Standards must be notified with completion of the relevant section of the application form. The licence holder will remain responsible for complying with the licence conditions and must ensure that they hold details for the tenants (under the lease agreement) and that all relevant checks have been completed.
8. The licence holder and/or his nominated managing agent shall undertake training courses as required by Housing Standards.
9. The licence holder must inform Housing Standards of any steps being taken to sell the property including the details of any successful purchaser(s) and ensure Land Registry Records are updated.
10. The Licence Holder must act lawfully and reasonably in requiring any advanced payments from occupiers; in handling rents; in returning deposits; and in making deductions from deposits. The Licence Holder will provide any occupier/prospective occupier with the following information:
- The amount of rent payable;
 - The details of any deposit required;
 - Details of what the deposit covers and arrangements for return, details of the tenancy deposit scheme;

- The frequency of such payments;
 - The details of any utilities or other charges included in the rent;
 - The responsibility for notifying Council Tax who is liable for payment a tenancy agreement, and notifying Council Tax when that tenancy terminates.
 - The responsibility for payment of utilities and arranging provision of such.
11. When gas and electricity are supplied through pre-payment meters, tokens and cards must be readily available from a local source at the price set by the utility provider.
 12. When the tenant “checks in” a detailed inventory must be completed by the licence holder. The inventory will be initialled on all pages by both parties, signed and dated by them on the last page. A copy should be provided to the tenant and the licence holder should retain a copy for his own records. The above procedure must be repeated for “check out” inventory at the end of tenancy.
- Note: Inventory covers items included within the tenancy and the condition of the property.
13. The licence holder will provide clear information to the tenants of their responsibilities for the condition of the property and payment of any utility bills at the end of the tenancy.

Mandatory Conditions relating to property

14. The licence holder shall ensure that occupants of the house receive written confirmation detailing arrangements in place to deal with repair issues and emergencies should they arise.
15. The Licence Holder and/or manager must ensure that the property is inspected at regular intervals, of at least once every month, to ensure that the conditions of the tenancy agreement are being adhered too. Should the Licence Holder receive a complaint about the property or tenancy, the Licence Holder and/or his manager must ensure that the property is inspected to investigate such complaint.
16. The licence holder shall ensure that the interior and exterior of the property is maintained in a reasonable decorative order and in a good state of repair.
17. The licence holder must ensure that all outbuildings, yards, forecourts and gardens surrounding the property are maintained, in repair and kept in a clean, tidy and safe condition and free from pest infestations.
18. Where major works are required during the period of the tenancy, the licence holder will provide suitable alternative accommodation for the period during which works are carried out.

19. The licence holder/manager will make arrangements for the regular cleaning of all common parts and ensure the cleaning of these areas takes place.
20. The licence holder must comply with the household waste collection and disposal system operated by Bolton Council. This includes ensuring an appropriate number of bins are provided for each household, including for recycling. A suitable storage area must be provided for the bins and any excess waste must not be allowed to accumulate at the property. The licence holder shall ensure that all refuse containers are returned within the curtilage of the property on the same day that they are emptied by the Council. At the start of the tenancy the tenants must be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the storage and presentation of the household waste whilst waiting for collection, to include the understanding of recycling and bin collection cycles.
21. The licence holder/manager must notify Housing Standards Council of any fires that have occurred at the premises within 24 hours (or the next working day i.e. Monday if fire occurred on a Friday evening or Saturday).

The licence holder must:

- a. Produce to Housing Standards within 14 days of demand, a Fire Detection & Alarm System Certificate (in accordance with BS 5839) obtained in respect of the house within the last 12 months, and every 6 months if a Grade A system has been installed.
 - b. Produce to Housing Standards within 14 days of demand, an Emergency Lighting test certificate obtained within the last 12 months.
 - c. Ensure said certificates are retained for a period of 5 years.
 - d. Provide a current Fire Risk Assessment to Housing Standards and adhere to all requirements within the assessment.
 - e. The fire detection system must be connected entirely to the landlords supply of electric.
22. The licence holder must provide, if gas is supplied to the property, satisfactory Gas Safe Records to Housing Standards. The occupier of each flat must be able to access the meter and ECV at all times for their individual supply. The Gas Safe Record recommendations must be completed within 3 months from the date of the record. The Record will indicate the presence of carbon monoxide detectors.

The licence holder must:

- a. Ensure that a carbon monoxide alarm is installed in any room in the house which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance.
 - b. Keep each such alarm in proper working order; and
 - c. Supply the authority, on demand, with a declaration by him as to the condition and positioning of such alarms.
23. The licence holder must supply the Council with an electrical installation condition report (EICR) for the whole of the electrical installation in accordance with current

IET wiring regulations. Such a report should be provided by a suitably trained, experienced and competent person e.g. NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT member. The report must state that the installation is in a 'Satisfactory' condition. The document must be dated within the last five years. You must hold a current, satisfactory electrical installation condition report throughout the duration of the HMO Licence. Should any remedial works be recommended on the periodic electrical survey report, the Licence Holder must ensure that such works are completed no later than 12 months following the date of the report and must inform Housing Standards upon completion of such works. The occupier of each flat must be able to access the meter and consumer unit at all times, for their individual supply.

24. If accommodation within the house is provided on a furnished basis and includes electrical appliances, the Licence Holder must produce to Housing Standards, for their inspection a portable appliance test (PAT) certificate within the first twelve months of the licence period, and yearly after.
25. The Licence Holder will ensure that any furniture/furnishings/floor covering provided is in safe and good condition and maintained or replaced as far as it is the Licence Holder's responsibility throughout the tenancy.
26. Where any works are to be carried out to the property, the licence holder must ensure the appropriate Building Regulation consent and/or planning permission is obtained prior to works commencing.

Mandatory Conditions relating to security

27. Where window locks are fitted, the Licence Holder will ensure that keys are provided to the relevant occupant.
28. Where previous tenants have not surrendered keys, the licence holder will arrange for a lock change to be undertaken, prior to new tenants moving in.
29. The licence holder must obtain references and right to rent checks for persons who wish to occupy the house and supply evidence of these to Bolton Council on demand.
30. The licence holder will respond to reference requests within reasonable timescales and provide an honest and accurate reference relating to existing or past tenants.
31. Where there are alley-gates installed to the rear of the licensed property, the Licence Holder must take responsibility for holding a key for any alley-gates which are in place, or which are installed. Ensure that all new tenants are advised of the need to keep the alley gates locked.

Mandatory Conditions relating to complaints, requests and anti-social behaviour

32. The licence holder must respond as required to any written requests made by Bolton Council, Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service or other relevant partner (this includes requests for information including

requests for personal information made under the Data Protection Act 2018) and attendance at meetings relating to the management of their property.

33. The licence holder must ensure that all new tenancy agreements include a clause covering anti-social behaviour, as provided with the licence application.
34. The Licence Holder must take all reasonability and all practicable steps for preventing and dealing effectively with anti-social behaviour. The Licence Holder and/or his manager are required to undertake an incremental process of investigation of any complaints, which have been made either directly to them, or via the Local Authority, regarding their occupiers.
35. For the purposes of these conditions, anti-social behaviour is taken to comprise behaviour by the occupants of the house and/or their visitors, which causes a nuisance or annoyance to other occupants of the house, to lawful visitors to the house or to persons residing in or lawfully visiting the locality of the house.
36. On request, the licence holder must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that they have properly managed the property and have taken all reasonable and practicable steps when dealing with complaints of anti-social behaviour and/or harassment made against the occupants. Examples of action which should be taken by the licence holder include the issuing warnings, both verbal and in writing.
37. The licence holder where directed by Bolton Council or Greater Manchester Police, and with their support, must take prompt action that is within their power to terminate a tenancy to prevent anti-social behaviour and nuisance.

Additional licence conditions (if required)

Prescribed Conditions

There is a legislative requirement under The Housing Act 2004 schedule 4 to include Prescribed Conditions as specified in the schedule. The Prescribed Conditions are also embedded within the aforementioned mandatory conditions. However Prescribed conditions 7 and 8 have been amended by Bolton Council and details are provided with the HMO Amenity Standards, which must be complied with.

1. If gas is supplied to the house, produce to the local housing authority annually for their inspection, a gas safety certificate obtained in respect of the house within the last 12 months.

2. The licence holder must:
 - a. keep electrical appliances and furniture made available by him in the house in a safe condition.
 - b. to supply the authority, on demand, with a declaration by him as to the safety of such appliances and furniture
 - c. to ensure that every electrical installation in the house is in proper working order and safe for continued use; and to supply the authority, on demand, with a declaration by him as to the safety of such installations.
3. The licence holder must:
 - a. Ensure that a smoke alarm is installed on each storey of the house on which there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation; and
 - b. Keep each such alarm in proper working order; and
 - c. Supply the authority, on demand, with a declaration by him as to the condition and positioning of such alarms
4. The licence holder must:
 - a. Ensure that a carbon monoxide alarm is installed in any room in the house which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and contains a fixed combustion appliance;
 - b. Keep each such alarm in proper working order; and
 - c. Supply the authority, on demand, with a declaration by him as to the condition and positioning of such alarms.
5. Supply the occupiers of the house a written statement of the terms under which they occupy it
6. The licence holder must:
 - a. ensure that the floor area of any room in the HMO used as sleeping accommodation by one person
 - b. aged over 10 years is not less than 6.51 square metres
 - c. ensure that the floor area of any room in the HMO used as sleeping accommodation by two persons aged over 10 years is not less than 10.22 square metres
 - d. ensure that the floor area of any room in the HMO used as sleeping accommodation by one person aged under 10 years is not less than 4.64 square metres
 - e. ensure that any room in the HMO with a floor area of less than 4.64 square metres is not used as sleeping accommodation.
7. The licence holder must ensure that:
 - a. Where any room in the HMO is used as sleeping accommodation by persons aged over 10 years only, it is not used as such by more than the maximum number of persons aged over 10 years specified in the licence.

- b. Where any room in the HMO is used as sleeping accommodation by persons aged under 10 years only, it is not used as such by more than the maximum number of persons aged under 10 years specified in the licence.
 - c. Where any room in the HMO is used as sleeping accommodation by persons aged over 10 years and persons aged under 10 years, it is not used as such by more than the maximum number of persons aged over 10 years specified in the licence and the maximum number of persons aged under 10 years so specified.
8. The licence holder must comply with the household waste collection and disposal system operated by Bolton Council. This includes ensuring an appropriate number of bins are provided for the size of the household, including for recycling. A suitable storage area must be provided for the bins, and any excess waste must not be allowed to accumulate at the property pending collection.

Houses in Multiple Occupation Guidance and Amenity Standards

**Guidance document containing explanatory notes and
the standards to be applied to Houses in Multiple
Occupation in Bolton**

**NB.THESE STANDARDS ARE STILL SUBJECT TO
APPROVAL**

Housing Standards
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Version - January 2026

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Chapter 1 –Introductions & Definitions

1.1 Introduction

This document sets out Bolton Council's standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and should be used by landlords and agents operating in the area to ensure that their properties meet or exceed these minimum requirements.

Should you wish to vary from these standards due to the individual circumstances of your property and you think an alternative solution would work better, please discuss this with the Housing Standards team. Providing the proposal is within the legislative framework and provides tenants with safe and quality accommodation we will try to adopt a flexible approach when possible.

1.2 Definition of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

The Housing Act 2004 contained a complex and comprehensive definition of what constitutes a HMO. For the purposes of this guidance a simplified definition is more useful which aims to give landlords an understanding of what constitutes a HMO.

In general terms, a HMO is a dwelling (a building or part of a building) that is occupied by three or more people who do not form a single household AND who share one or more basic amenities. A household for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004 can be defined as a group of persons who are all members of the same family (this includes spouses, blood relatives, co- habitees and same sex couples), whilst amenities can be taken to mean toilets, personal washing facilities and cooking facilities.

The exception to this definition is self-contained flats that do not comply with the Building Regulations of 1991 (i.e. they were converted before these regulations were in force or after this without obtaining the necessary approvals). Despite the fact that there is likely to be no sharing of basic amenities in this type of property, they are classed as HMOs for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004 (Section 257).

Chapter 2 – HMO Licensing

2.1 Introduction

Mandatory HMO licensing

The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018 ('the Prescribed Description Order 2018') extended the scope of section 55(2)(a) of the Housing Act 2004 ('the Act'), so that mandatory HMO licensing applies to HMO properties which are less than three storeys high. Therefore, Mandatory HMO licensing applies if a property is:

- Occupied by five or more persons, from two or more separate households **AND**
- Share a basic amenity such as a toilet, bathroom or kitchen

2.2 Additional HMO licensing

Additional Licensing under section 56 of the Housing Act 2004, allows the local authority to designate either the whole of their district or an area within their district as subject to an additional HMO licensing scheme, which may include

- Smaller HMO's – occupied by 3 or 4 people, forming two or more households and sharing facilities such as a bathroom or kitchen.
- Self-contained flats that fall with the definition of Section 257 of the Housing Act 2004. This is where the conversion of the properties did not meet the appropriate building standards and less than two-thirds of the self-contained flats are owner-occupied.

2.3 Licensing Fees

Under the licensing arrangements the Council will make a charge for administering and issuing a licence. Fees must however, reflect the actual costs of licensing a property and operating the licensing regime.

A licence will last for a maximum of five years, although it may be issued for a shorter period in certain circumstances.

2.4 Licensing Application

Applications for HMO licences should be online via the Council's website. In order to make an application you will need all the details about the property, licence holder and any manager. You will also be required to upload various certificates and documents and make payment. [Home in multiple occupation licence – Bolton Council](#)

2.5 Public Register

It is a legal requirement for Local Authorities to provide a register of all specific details relating to licensable HMOs. Anyone can request to view a public register by visiting the relevant council offices by appointment (see front cover for details). The public register will contain information as required by Section 11 of the Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 (these regulations can be accessed through www.legislation.gov.uk). In summary the following information will be held:

- Name and address of licence holder and any manager
- Address of the property to be licensed
- Basic information on the property to be licensed (i.e. number of storeys, number and type of rooms etc.).
- The maximum number of households permitted to occupy the HMO

2.6 Licensing Procedure

Anyone who owns or manages a HMO that must be licensed has to apply to the council for a licence. For the Council to issue a licence it must be satisfied that the:

- HMO is reasonably suitable for occupation by the number of people allowed under the licence;
- Proposed licence holder is a fit and proper person. The proposed licence holder will be required to submit a Basic Criminal Disclosure which has been obtained within three months prior to submitting an application, as part of the fit and proper persons check.
- Proposed licence holder is the most appropriate person to hold the licence;
- Proposed manager, if there is one, is fit and proper;
- Proposed management arrangements are satisfactory, the person involved in the management of the HMO is competent and the financial structures for the management are suitable.

2.7 Offences and Penalties

Failure to licence a licensable HMO is a criminal offence and subject to an unlimited fine on conviction in the Magistrates Court. Alternatively, you could be issued with a civil penalty of up to £30,000.

Where a property is licensable but the landlord, does not apply for one and therefore operates without a licence then no rent or other charge may be taken for the property and Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 (Notice Requiring Possession of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy) is unavailable as grounds for eviction. Breaching any licensing condition is a criminal offence and could result in a prosecution or being issued with a civil penalty.

2.8 Management Regulations

The person in control of a HMO is subject to a number of regulations around looking after, and maintaining the property. These are

- The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007.

It is strongly advisable that you, and all persons involved in the management of the property familiarise yourselves with these regulations.

2.9 Planning Permission

Planning permission is now required for all HMOs in Bolton regardless of size.

On Friday 13 June 2025 Bolton Council introduced a boroughwide immediate Article 4 Direction removing the permitted development right to convert a dwellinghouse (Class C3) into a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Class C4) for up to six residents. This means that all such conversions require planning permission. This includes cases where buildings have been modified but had not yet been occupied as HMOS on this date. Conversions of dwellings to HMOs for seven or more residents fall under the Sui Generis use class and continue to require planning permission as they have always done.

The starting point for planning decisions is the Development Plan. This includes the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan, the Core Strategy and the Allocation Plan and Policy Map and is supported by various Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

Compliance with the Council's HMO licencing requirements does not mean that planning permission will be granted. The guidance and standards contained within this document are not part of the Development Plan and have limited weight in any planning decision.

The Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, which will contain bespoke policies setting out the planning requirements for HMOs. Until such time as this is adopted, applicants should as a minimum familiarise themselves with PfE Policy JP-P1, Core Strategy Policy CG4 and the Council's General Design Supplementary Planning Document.

PfE Policy JP-P1 and Core Strategy Policy CG4 require all new residential developments, including HMOs, to be comfortable and inviting, with indoor and outdoor environments that offer a high level of internal and external amenity. They also require development to have good access to natural light, outlook, privacy and an adequate internal and external layout.

SPD General Design sets out minimum interface distances from main room windows. For the purposes of HMO applications, Bolton Council take the view that main room windows will include any shared kitchen / dining room, shared sitting room and all bedrooms. Where these standards cannot be met, developments will be expected to compensate in some other way, for example with larger room sizes.

Where bedrooms include kitchenettes with cooking facilities and ensuite bathrooms, they will be deemed to have provided all the 'basic amenities' listed under Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004 and will be classed as studio flats. They will in turn then need to meet the minimum space requirement for a 1-person 1-bedroom dwelling of 37sqm as set out in the Government's *Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards (March 2015)*.

Policy JP-P1 also requires development to contribute towards a sense of community. This means that applications which will contribute towards an over proliferation of HMOs in a particular area or which result in a dwelling being sandwiched between two other HMOs are unlikely to be acceptable.

Other requirements include the provision of adequate bin storage areas and cycle storage.

If you are in anyway unsure what might be an acceptable form of development for your HMO, you are advised to engage with us using the Council's pre-application service, details of which are on the Council's website: www.bolton.gov.uk/planning.

2.10 Other Statutory Requirements

Compliance with the licensing requirements of the Housing Act 2004 and the planning requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 does not confer exemption from action by the Council under other legislation.

The Council may serve a range of notices in respect of houses in multiple occupation. These include notice requiring the execution of works to reduce health and safety hazards identified; notice requiring steps to be taken to reduce the level of occupancy; notice to remedy neglect of management and powers to take over poorly managed properties.

It is also advisable to contact Building Control to ensure compliance with Building Regulations.

These powers operate independently of any licensing scheme.

Chapter 3 – Crowding and Space Standards

3.1 Introduction

Lack of space and overcrowded conditions have been linked to a number of health outcomes, including psychological distress and mental disorders, especially those associated with a lack of privacy and childhood development. Crowding can result in an increased heart rate, increased perspiration, reduction of tolerance, and a reduction of the ability to concentrate. Crowded conditions are also linked with increased hygiene risks, an increased risk of accidents, and spread of contagious disease.

Within a dwelling there should be sufficient space for the separation of different household activities, either by physical separation or by a clearly defined space within a larger space. The degree of separation is partly dependent on the number of people who can be expected to share the space, and whether or not they are expected to be part of the same household.

3.2 Crowding and the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

Guidance has been provided by the Government to assist officers in assessing the hazard posed by overcrowding in HMO properties. Where an officer believes that conditions are overcrowded, a risk assessment will be undertaken using the HHSRS and the score generated will guide any action taken. Sufficient space must be provided for the separation of household activities and adequate space provided to allow households tasks to be undertaken in a safe manner without the risk of collision (e.g. cooking). Within each unit there must be sufficient space for the separation of domestic activities e.g. cooking and sleeping in bedsit type accommodation. Privacy must also be considered to allow occupants to spend time alone, for example bathrooms and toilets must have locks to allow occupants to feel they have the right to privacy.

The tables provided on the following pages are to provide landlords with guidance as to what room sizes are acceptable for a variety of HMO type accommodation. **Note – Bolton Council has increased the sizes of HMO bedrooms from the minimum sizes set out in legislation.**

3.3 Minimum bedroom sizes

The floor area of any room in a HMO used as sleeping accommodation by one person aged over 10 years must not be less than 7.5 square metres.

The floor area of any room in a HMO used as sleeping accommodation by two persons aged over 10 years must not be less than 11.5 square metres.

A separate living/communal space will also be required in addition to the above. (See table 3.5)

3.4 Table 1 - room sizes for self-contained HMO's (Section 257 flats)

These are buildings that have been converted into and consist of self-contained flats where the building work undertaken in connection with the conversion did not comply with the appropriate building standards and still does not comply with them.

Property Type	Room (m ²)					
	Kitchen	Bedroom	Living room	Living / Bedroom	Living / kitchen	Living /kitchen/ bedroom
Self-contained unit – one person	4.65	6.51	9.0	10.22	11.0	13
Self-contained unit - two people	4.65	10.22	12	14.0	15.0	20.5

The above table can be used to calculate the minimum room sizes for self-contained units that are classified as HMOs.

† Single room units are only suitable for individuals, unless they are married or co-habiting couples. In the case of a couple living in one room accommodation, it must not be less than 15m². Persons of the opposite sex over the age of ten, who are not living as partners, are not permitted to share sleeping rooms.

3.5 Table 2 – room sizes when sharing amenities (includes shared houses and bedsits)

Minimum bedroom sizes:

1 person	7.5 m ²
2 persons	11.5m ²

Room No. of occupants	Kitchen (m²)	Communal space (m²)
1-4	8	8.5
5-7	9	11
8-10	13.5	16.5

Guide to the above table:

- A communal space is separate from the kitchen and Ideally be on the same floor as the kitchen. Or it can be a combined kitchen/dining room but all amenities specified in chapter 4 must be provided.
- The minimum sizes for these rooms are shown above dependent on the number of occupiers. These are minimum sizes and the amenities prescribed for kitchen facilities in chapter 4 must be adhered to.
- A room smaller than 7.5m² **will not** be considered suitable to be used as a bedroom

Note: no single kitchen can be for more than 10 people.

For example: for a 6 person HMO, the kitchen must be a minimum of 9m² with a minimal communal space of 11m². The floor area can be combined into kitchen/communal space, however amenities in Chapter 4 must be provided.

Therefore, for 6 persons 2 sinks, 2 ovens with grill, 2 x 4 ring hob (1 oven or 1 hob can be replaced with an airfryer of 6 litres) , 3 metres x 500mm of worksurface, 6 x 500mm lockable cupboard space (not sink unit), 2 x 500mm communal cupboards (not sink unit) , 2 x 500mm drawer pack, 2 x large fridge freezers (1700mm in height minimum), 2 x under counter fridges.

Chapter 4 – Amenity Standards

4.1 Facilities for Storage, Preparation & Cooking of Food

There must be adequate and sufficient facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food and the disposal of waste water for the number of persons in occupation. In addition:

- Adequate means of and artificial lighting must be provided
- Mechanical ventilation to outside must be provided
- Adequate work surfaces to allow the safe preparation of food as stated
- Adequate refrigerated, frozen and dry storage to allow food to be stored safely as stated
- Kitchen to have at least 6 suitably located electrical sockets, plus dedicated sockets for cooker and washer.

No single kitchen to be for more than 10 people.

Minimum requirements when facilities are shared:

Appliance/Equipment	Minimum requirements
Sinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 per 5 occupiers• Appropriate splash back• Provide constant hot and cold water• Suitable draining area
Cookers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 Oven and grill per 5 occupiers• 4 ring hob per 5 occupiers• 1 Microwave per 5 occupiers• For 6-10 occupiers second oven or 4 ring hob can be substituted for an air fryer (minimum 6 litre)•
Worktop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 500mm x 500mm per person
Cupboard space (not to include under sink storage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 500mm width lockable cupboard per person• 500m width communal cupboard per 5 occupiers• 500m width drawer pack per 5 occupiers•
Fridge/freezers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 large fridge freezer (min height 1700mm) and one under counter fridge per 5 occupiers.•
Dining area (within kitchen or communal space)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1-4 person - 4 person table and chairs• 5-10 person – 6 person table and chairs

Minimum requirements when facilities are for exclusive use:

Appliance/Equipment	Minimum requirements		
Sinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 sink • Provide constant hot and cold water • Suitable draining area • Appropriate splash back 		
Cookers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 ring hob • Oven and grill 	OR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 ring hob • Oven and grill combined • Microwave or airfryer
Ventilation	Mechanical ventilation to the outside air or openable window		
Worktop & cupboards (suitable for the number of occupiers)	Worktop 1000mm x 500mm 1 x 500mm width drawer pack 2 x 500mm width cupboard other than sink unit Suitable space within the kitchen area, with available socket for refrigeration.		
Dining area	2-person table and chairs or breakfast bar		

4.2 Personal Washing Facilities General requirements

- All toilets and bathrooms must be suitably located in relation to the living accommodation in the
- HMO i.e. amenities shared by two or more households must be accessible from a common area, toilets must not open directly into kitchens and must not be more than one floor distance away from any user.
- Mechanical extract ventilation is essential for shared facilities.
- Adequate heating in the bathroom must be provided.
- Every water closet (W.C.) to be fitted with a suitable seat, secured to the floor and discharging to suitable drainage. Cistern to have a constant supply of water. External W.C. will not be accepted within the required ratio.
- Wash hand basin (WHB) 560mm x 430mm minimum size to be fitted with suitable splash back with constant supplies of hot and cold water and trapped waste outlet
- Bath (if fitted) minimum of 1.67 metres in length with suitable splash back minimum height 450mm
- Shower cubicle (if fitted) minimum 800mm x 800mm purpose made cubicle
- Wall finish must be readily cleansable.
- Floor finish must be readily cleansable, non-absorbant and fitted.

Self-contained Flats

- 1 W.C., wash hand basin and bath or shower per flat

Bedsits, Shared Houses, Hostels and Halls of Residence

- 1 – 4 persons 1 full bathroom (comprising bath/shower, W.C. & WHB)
- 5 Persons 1 full bathroom AND 1 separate W.C. with WHB
- 6 – 10 persons 2 full bathrooms AND 1 separate W.C. with WHB
- 11 – 15 persons 3 full bathrooms AND 1 separate W.C. with WHB
- 16-19 persons 4 full bathrooms AND 2 separate W.C.s with WHBs

Chapter 5 – Certification

5.1 Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

As a landlord, you are responsible for the safety of your tenants. The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 specifically deal with the duties of landlords to ensure that gas appliances, fittings and flues provided for tenants' use are safe. Note: boilers serving the whole/part of the building must be located in a communal area.

As a landlord, you have a duty to ensure:

- Gas fittings (appliances, pipework) and flues are maintained in a safe condition;
- All installation, maintenance and safety checks are carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- **An annual safety check is carried out on each gas appliance/flue** by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Checks need to have taken place within one year of the start of the tenancy/lease date, unless the appliances have been installed for less than 12 months, in which case they should be checked within 12 months of their installation date;
- A record of each safety check is kept for two years;
- A copy of the current safety check record is issued to each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being completed, or to any new tenant before they move in (in certain cases the record can be displayed).

5.2 Electrical Safety

The electrical installation to the property should be installed and maintained in accordance with a recognised standard, such as the current edition of the IEE (Institute of Electrical Engineers) Wiring Regulations and **a satisfactory Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) report must be obtained. The installation should be retested and certified, as described or every five years**, or following any alterations or extensions to the system.

All work to the electrical installation should be carried out and certified by a NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) member or approved body or competent person.

All electrical appliances provided by the landlord will require a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) certificate.

5.3 Location of meters

All gas, electrical and water meters ideally are to be located in a communal area, to be accessible for reading. However, Emergency Cut off Valve (ECV), consumer unit and stop cock must be located in a communal area. Bedrooms containing ECV and or consumer units will be prohibited for use until such time as they are re-sited to a communal area. In properties with mixed residential/ commercial use separate supplies, meters and isolation must be provided and sited appropriately within the separate units.

5.4 Furniture Safety

All furniture provided with the accommodation must comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended). You are required to sign a declaration on the application form to the effect that the above condition is met.

5.5 Waste Disposal

Supply suitable receptacles for waste storage within communal kitchens. Provide adequate receptacles and storage area for waste pending collection. Tenants must be advised of their responsibilities in relation to waste storage and collection. Ensuring that waste is stored correctly must form part of the management checks

5.6 Common parts internally and externally

All common parts of the property must be clean, well maintained and kept free of obstructions. Ensuring that common parts of the property are clean, well maintained and kept free of obstructions must form part of the management checks.

5.7 Fire Safety

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is statute law which imposes requirements and duties on the responsible person (the person having control over the premises, i.e. the owner, landlord, managing agent etc) of the premises to ensure the safety of all relevant persons.

The Fire Safety Order (FSO) applies to most premises other than single private dwellings. One of the main requirements of the FSO places a duty on the responsible person to ensure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been carried out. This must identify the general precautions that are required for the safety of all relevant persons, and remedial work must be conducted in accordance with the assessment to reduce the risk from fire.

Housing Standards will request copies of Fire Risk Assessments and will, where necessary take formal action should remedial work identified in the Fire Risk Assessment remain outstanding.

A certificate confirming the correct installation and operation of the fire alarm system must be submitted with a licence application. Certificates should conform to the relevant British Standard (BS5839).

Where emergency lighting is fitted, a certificate will be required to show this has been installed and tested in accordance with current British Standards.

5.8 Fire Safety Guidance

For detailed guidance about the required safety measures in HMOs please refer to the LACORS national fire safety guidance “Housing - Fire Safety Guidance on Fire Safety Provisions for Certain Types of existing housing”. This can be found at [Fire safety: guidance for those with legal duties - GOV.UK](#)

Appendix D: Fee Structure Breakdown

The Council has powers to charge landlords a fee under Section 63(7) of the Housing Act 2004. The proposed fee considers all costs incurred by the Council in carrying out its licensing functions.

The proposed licensing fees are based upon best practice and experience from other local authorities operating similar licensing schemes. The proposed fee will cover the cost of setting up, administering, monitoring and enforcing the additional HMO licensing scheme to ensure the scheme is self-financing, should it be implemented.

It is proposed to create a dedicated team of 5 officers to focus specifically with additional licensing, as there is insufficient capacity with the existing Housing Standards team, therefore a dedicated resource is being proposed.

The Council proposes to charge a basic fee of £1,211 for a licence, which will be due in two parts as shown in the table below.

Additional HMO licencing fee	Amount
Part A – Application Fee	£760
Part B – Fee on approval of licence	£451
Total	£1,211

Annual breakdown	£242.46
Weekly breakdown	£4.65

The Part A of the licence fee is payable when the licence application is submitted and is for the assessment and processing of the application.

The Part B of the licence fee is due following the issue of a draft licence, but prior to the licence being issued.

In principle the Council should not make a surplus from the scheme, neither should it make a loss. It is intended that the fees will be reviewed on an annual basis, along with regular monitoring of the assumptions made in determining the licence fee.

Appendix E: List of Stakeholder Organisations Invited to Respond

A comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise has been undertaken to identify all individuals, groups, and organisations likely to be affected by the proposed Additional Licensing Scheme. This has ensured that every relevant stakeholder group will be represented and that engagement activity will be as appropriately targeted across the borough.

The following table outlines the key stakeholder categories that have been identified and how each group will be initially informed about the consultation process.

Consultee	How this stakeholder group will be informed of the consultation
Internal council officers	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Members	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Accredited landlords or Landlord Forum Members	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Landlords operating in Bolton who are not accredited or a member of the Landlord Forum	Newspaper article, social media
Landlord associations representing landlords	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Local letting companies identified through internet searches (the council may not be able to access all organisations)	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Greater Manchester Good Landlord Charter	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Tenants living in the Private Rented Sector	Newspaper article, social media
Residents living in neighbourhoods affected by the proposed licensing area	Newspaper article, social media
Local residents groups	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Greater Manchester Police	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
The Greater Manchester Combined Authority	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Neighbouring authorities:	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Community and support organisations	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website

Consultee	How this stakeholder group will be informed of the consultation
Housing associations	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website
Local businesses	Individual email linking the individual to the council consultation website

Appendix G: Glossary of Terms

A

- **Additional HMO Licensing (Additional Licensing)** – A discretionary licensing scheme under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004 that a council can introduce to require **certain HMOs** (beyond those covered by mandatory licensing) to be licensed and meet specified management and property standards.
- **Amenity (shared amenities)** – Facilities such as a kitchen, bathroom, toilet, or living space that are used by more than one household within a property.
- **Anti-social behaviour (ASB)** – Behaviour that causes nuisance, annoyance, harassment, alarm, or distress to others (e.g., noise, intimidation, persistent disturbance).

B

- **Building Regulations** – National standards for building work (including conversions) designed to ensure safety, energy efficiency, and accessibility.

C

- **Category 1 hazard** – The most serious type of hazard identified under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), indicating an immediate or severe risk to health and safety.
- **Category 2 hazard** – A less severe hazard under HHSRS that still requires attention to reduce risks to occupants.
- **Civil penalty** – A financial penalty (up to £30,000 per offence in certain housing cases) that a council may impose as an alternative to prosecution for specified housing offences.
- **Consultation** – A formal process where the council seeks views and evidence from stakeholders before making a decision.
- **Converted building (to flats)** – A building that has been altered so it contains two or more self-contained flats.

D

- **Designation (licensing designation)** – The legal decision that defines where a licensing scheme applies (e.g., boroughwide) and which property types are included.
- **Disrepair** – Property defects or poor conditions (e.g., damp, mould, faulty heating, unsafe electrics) that may pose hazards or breach legal standards.

E

- **EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report)** – A report confirming whether electrical installations are safe and identifying any remedial work needed.
- **EPC (Energy Performance Certificate)** – A certificate showing a property's energy efficiency rating (A-G) and typical running costs/energy recommendations.

- **EqlA (Equality Impact Assessment)** – An assessment of how a policy/proposal may affect people with protected characteristics and other vulnerable groups, and what mitigations are needed.
- **Enforcement** – Action taken by the council to secure compliance with housing law (e.g., notices, penalties, prosecutions, works in default).
- **Escape route (means of escape)** – The protected route(s) occupants use to leave safely in an emergency, particularly fire (e.g., protected hallway and stairs).

F

- **Fee (licence fee)** – The charge paid by an applicant to cover the council's costs of processing, issuing and administering a licence (including compliance and enforcement activity).
- **Fire door (FD30/30-minute fire door)** – A door designed to resist fire and smoke for a set time, helping protect escape routes.
- **Fit and proper person test** – Checks made by the council to determine whether a proposed licence holder/manager is suitable (e.g., relevant convictions, harassment/illegal eviction history, housing enforcement history).

G

- **Gas Safety Certificate (Landlord Gas Safety Record)** – A record confirming gas appliances/flues have been safety checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer (usually annually).
- **GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority)** – The combined authority for Greater Manchester, responsible for certain strategic functions and regional initiatives.

H

- **HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System)** – The risk-based system used by councils to assess hazards in residential properties.
- **HMO (House in Multiple Occupation)** – A property occupied by people who are not all one household and who share facilities (e.g., kitchen/bathroom).
- **HMO Management Regulations** – Legal duties on managers/landlords of HMOs to maintain safety and proper management of common parts, services and living accommodation.
- **Housing Act 2004** – The main legislation covering HMO licensing, HHSRS, and other housing enforcement powers used by councils.

I

- **Improvement Notice** – A formal notice requiring repairs or improvements where hazards are identified, within a specified timeframe.
- **Inspection** – A visit by council officers to assess conditions, hazards, compliance with licence conditions, and management standards.

J

- **JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment)** – A statutory assessment of local population needs and inequalities (including health and housing factors).

K

- **Kitchen (shared kitchen)** – A common amenity in HMOs; licensing and standards may specify minimum provision (e.g., facilities, layout, hygiene, fire safety).

L

- **Landlord** – The person or organisation that rents out a property to tenants.
- **Letting agent/Managing agent** – A business acting on behalf of a landlord to let a property and/or manage it day-to-day.
- **Licence (HMO licence)** – A legal permission issued by the council allowing an HMO to operate, subject to conditions.
- **Licence conditions** – Requirements attached to a licence (e.g., safety certificates, waste arrangements, maximum occupancy, management standards).
- **Local Housing Allowance (LHA)** – The rate used to calculate housing benefit/universal credit housing costs for private renters.

M

- **Mandatory HMO Licensing (mandatory licensing)** – The national scheme requiring licensing for HMOs occupied by 5 or more people forming 2 or more households.
- **Means of escape** – See **Escape route**.

N

- **Neighbourhood nuisance** – Issues affecting local amenity such as waste accumulation, noise, pests, and property neglect.
- **Notice** – A legal document served by the council requiring action (e.g., improvement, prohibition, compliance).

O

- **Occupancy/maximum occupancy** – The number of people permitted to live in a property (often linked to room sizes and amenity standards).
- **Overcrowding** – Where the number of occupants is too high for the space available, creating health and safety risks and/or breaching legal standards.

P

- **Permitted development rights (PDR)** – Planning rules allowing certain changes of use (e.g., C3 to C4 in some contexts) without full planning permission, unless removed by an Article 4 Direction.

- **Planning permission** – Formal approval required for certain developments or changes of use, assessed under planning law.
- **Prohibition Order** – A legal order restricting the use of all or part of a property because conditions pose a serious risk (may prevent occupation).
- **Protected characteristic** – A characteristic protected under the Equality Act 2010 (e.g., age, disability, race, sex).

R

- **Rogue landlord** – A landlord who persistently breaks housing law, fails to maintain properties, or engages in harmful practices (e.g., illegal eviction).

S

- **Section 56 (Housing Act 2004)** – The legal power enabling councils to designate an Additional Licensing Scheme for HMOs in all or part of their area.
- **Section 257 HMO** – A building converted into self-contained flats that **does not meet relevant building standards** (at the time of conversion) and where **less than two-thirds** of the flats are owner-occupied.
- **Selective Licensing** – A discretionary scheme under the Housing Act 2004 applying to *all* private rented homes in a defined area (not just HMOs), where certain conditions are met.
- **Self-contained flat** – Accommodation with exclusive use of kitchen, bathroom, and toilet facilities.
- **Smoke alarm/interlinked detection** – Fire detection equipment; interlinked alarms activate together to improve warning in shared/multi-storey homes.

T

- **Tenant** – A person who rents and occupies a property under a tenancy agreement.
- **Tenancy sustainment** – Supporting tenants to remain safely housed and avoid eviction or homelessness.

U

- **Unauthorised/unlicensed HMO** – A property operating as an HMO without the required licence (where licensing applies), and/or without any required planning permission.

V

- **Variation (to a licence)** – A change to licence conditions or details during the licence period (where allowed under the relevant process).

W

- **Waste and refuse management** – Arrangements for storage and disposal of household waste, recycling, and bulky items; often addressed through licence conditions.
- **Works in default** – Where the council carries out required works because the responsible person has not complied, and then seeks to recover costs.