

Report to: Housing Study Group
Subject: Private Sector Housing Activities
Date: 13th September 2023

Introduction

At the Housing Study Group on 19th July 2023 information was requested on complaints and enforcement activities in relation to the private rented sector in the borough.

Regulation of housing conditions in the private rented sector is undertaken by environmental health officers / technical Officers as part of the wide range of activities carried out by the Housing and Vulnerability Service.

The table below identifies;

- The service requests logged relating to private rented sector conditions requiring detailed advice or inspection and investigation.
- Inspections of houses in multiple occupation, these are properties shared by 2 or more unrelated households (ie bedsits / shared accommodation)
- Applications for a house in multiple occupation licence – these are the larger properties occupied by 5 or more people
- Certificate checks relating to houses in multiple occupation, these relate to fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, electrical and gas safety.

Environmental health housing activities	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Service requests logged	217	242	191	217
House in multiple occupation inspections	73	1	3	27
House in multiple occupation licensing applications	1	3	37	13
House in multiple occupation certificate checks undertaken	73	127	157	162

During property inspections officers are assessing for the presence of hazards to health under the Housing Health and Safety Hazard Rating System. There are 29 hazards assessed for grouped in to physiological, psychological and safety. Depending on the severity they are then classed as either category 1 or category 2 hazards. If hazards are identified the authority has a duty to carry out some form of action to remove them.

The table below shows the hazards to health removed from properties through our actions over the last four years and identified the most commonly occurring hazards to health.

	damp/ mould	excess cold	electrical	falls	fire	misc	total	
cat 1 - 19/20	1	12	9	4	2	3	31	
cat 2 - 19/20	8	7	4	8	32	27	86	
total 19/20								117
cat 1 - 20/21	8	5	11	0	8	4	36	
cat 2 - 20/21	11	7	6	12	18	9	63	
total 20/21								99

cat 1 - 21/22	0	5	10	1	12	11	39	
cat 2 - 21/22	5	3	7	5	5	12	37	
total 21/22								76
cat 1 - 22/23	3	12	25	5	14	12	66	
cat 2 - 22/23	8	9	8	12	20	14	71	
total 22/23								137

The service has a Housing Enforcement Guide which sits under the corporate enforcement policy and guides our enforcement decisions for consistency and fairness. This has an approach moving from informal action to enforcement action depending on the circumstances of each case. The table below identifies the notices served over the 4 years

Notices	all notices	Notices for category 1 hazards
19/20	18	10
20/21	9	3
21/22	39	3
22/23	45	8

Summary

The details included are a snapshot of the work undertaken in relation to activities to maintain safe, warm, and suitable accommodation in the private rented sector. Further details on the activities or further work of the team can be provided.