

Private Rented Sector Licensing Consultation in Sefton

We want to hear your views about proposed licensing schemes to improve private rented sector housing in Sefton.

As a thank you for participating, you will be entered into a prize draw to win one of three prizes of Marks & Spencer's gift vouchers. The 1st prize is £100 in vouchers, 2nd prize of £50 in vouchers and a 3rd prize of £25 in vouchers.

If you have any queries, please email the council at landlord.licensing@sefton.gov.uk or Karen Etheridge, Research Manager at M·E·L Research on Freephone 0800 073 0348 or karen.etheridge@melresearch.co.uk.

Background

Sefton Council is committed to making the borough a safe and attractive place to live in and as part of the Sefton 2030 vision there is a significant ambition to improve and attract investment to improve the prosperity of Sefton.

Between 2001 and 2011, Sefton's private rented sector has increased by 64%. The Council recognises the crucial role the private rented housing sector plays in creating a strong and sustainable housing market and in meeting the housing needs of many households. However, the short-term nature of some tenancies brings challenges especially when those properties are not well managed. Increased Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and poor property condition are a growing concern. The 2013 Sefton house condition survey found that 24% of privately rented properties failed to meet the decent homes standard, compared to 16% of all private housing in the borough.

Sefton Council is proposing to introduce both Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing schemes for privately rented properties across selected areas of the Borough. The aim of the schemes is to lead to an improvement of management and property conditions in the private rented sector across those areas.

Consultation on the proposal

The council are consulting on a proposal (full details of the matters being considered and the evidence behind the proposal are detailed in a consultation document which can be found at: [Click here](#) . The proposal being considered is:

To introduce 'selective licensing' in the Bootle area

Landlords of all privately rented properties in the Bootle area would need to apply for a licence from the Council. They will need to meet minimum management and property standards and these will help protect landlords, tenants and residents.

And introduce 'additional licensing' in parts of Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands/Seaforth & central Southport

Landlords of any house in multiple occupation (HMO) in these specific areas would need to apply for a licence from the Council. This would help the Council ensure the properties are managed properly.

Please give us your views.

About you

Q1 **Which of the following best describes you?** (Please tick all that apply)

- A resident of Sefton
- A landlord with a property (or number of properties) in Sefton
- A landlord with properties in neighbouring boroughs.
- An agent managing properties in Sefton
- A business or organisation operating in Sefton
- Other (Please specify below)

Q2 **[For residents] Which of the answers best describes your housing tenure?** (Please tick one box only)

- Owned outright
- Buying on mortgage
- Rented from Housing Association / Trust
- Rented from private landlord
- Living with family or friends
- Owner and occupier renting out a spare room
- Homeless
- Temporary accommodation
- Other (Please specify below)

Q3 **[For residents] Which area of Sefton do you live in/operate a business in?** (Please write in your postcode/ your area below)

This will help us see where responses are coming from in Sefton. Postcodes will only be used for mapping and analysis purposes and will not be linked to any personal data.

Q4 **[For landlords/agents only] Which area(s) of Sefton do you have/manage properties in?** (Please write in your postcode/ your area below).

This will help us see where rented/managed properties are. Postcodes will only be used for mapping and analysis purposes and will not be linked to any personal data).

Scheme proposal

Local authorities can choose to require private landlords or their agents to obtain a licence before they can rent out their properties. This gives the Council the ability to offer support to landlords as well as identifying who and where landlords are, and powers to improve management and property standards. This can be done via 'selective' or 'additional HMO' licensing.

The Council is committed to improving the private rented sector and believes that by introducing licensing schemes, it would lead to an improvement of management and property conditions across the designated areas and aims to:

- Improve the quality of homes in the private rented sector, and make them more attractive to tenants
- Reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime
- Improve the image of Sefton and make areas more desirable to live in
- Ensure shorter void (empty) periods
- Provide support to landlords to help tackle ASB
- Protect vulnerable people who may currently be living in poorly maintained properties.

The Council is therefore considering the following proposals:

Introduce 'selective licensing' for private rented properties in the Bootle area

This would involve introducing a licensing scheme in Bootle which has been chosen based on evidence. All private sector landlords renting a property in the area would require a licence and have to meet the necessary criteria in order to hold a licence. This would allow the Council to take action where there is non-compliance with licence conditions.

Q5 To what extent would you support the proposal to implement a selective licensing scheme in Bootle? (Please tick one box only)

Fully support

Partially support

Do not support

Don't know / not sure

Q6 What impact, if any, do you feel implementing a selective licensing scheme would have on you if it were introduced? (Please tick one box only)

A positive impact

No impact

A negative impact

Don't know / not sure

Q7 Are there any other comments you would like to add? (Please write in below)

Introduce 'additional licensing' for HMO properties in parts of Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands / Seaforth and central Southport

This would require all private sector landlords to hold a licence for each house in multiple occupation (HMO) and they would have to meet the necessary criteria in order to hold a licence. This would provide safe homes for tenants to live in and allow the Council to take action where there is non-compliance with licence conditions.

Q8 To what extent would you support the proposal to implement additional (HMO) licensing schemes? (Please tick one box only)

Fully support

Partially support

Do not support

Don't know / not sure

Q9 What impact, if any, do you feel implementing additional (HMO) licensing schemes would have on you if they were introduced? (Please tick one box only)

A positive impact

No impact

A negative impact

Don't know / not sure

Q10 Are there any other comments you would like to add? (Please write in below)

Keep things as they are

The Council could keep things as they are and not implement any of the above schemes, meaning the existing services in place would remain as they are.

Q11 To what extent would you support keeping things as they are? (Please tick one box only)

Fully support

Partially support

Do not support

Don't know / not sure

Q12 What impact, if any, do you feel keeping things as they are would have on you? (Please tick one box only)

A positive impact

No impact

A negative impact

Don't know / not sure

Q13 Are there any other comments you would like to add? (Please write in below)

Q14 Please provide any additional comments you wish to make about this consultation below. We are particularly keen to hear any other ideas you may have to address any issues experienced with private rented properties. (Please write in below)

Licensing scheme fees

If licensing were to be introduced, in order to cover the Council's costs of administering the schemes, the Council would need to charge landlords a fee to apply for a licence that would last up to five years.

If licensing is implemented, it becomes a mandatory requirement within the Borough, and as the licence fee would then be a mandatory cost to landlords it will be subject to relevant tax relief, which will further lower the actual cost to landlords (and any cost which landlords might pass on to tenants).

Selective licensing fee

The current proposed fee for selective licensing is £695 to cover up to 5 years. This equates to £139 per year or £2.67 per week, with additional unit costs for larger properties. Details can be found in the Consultation document found here: [Click here](#) This is based on an approximation that there are around 2,800 properties that may fall under this type of scheme. An incentive of £75 is proposed to be given for 'early bird' applications (during first 3 months of the scheme introduction). An incentive of £150 is proposed to be given for those who are accredited with the Sefton Property Accreditation Scheme or a national landlord body such as the National Landlords Association (NLA) or Residential Landlords Association (RLA). Only one incentive can be awarded per application.

Q15 To what extent do you feel that a fee of £695 (equivalent to £139 per year or £2.67 per week) for up to five years is a reasonable figure if a selective licensing scheme were to be introduced? (Please tick one box only)

Totally reasonable Fairly reasonable Fairly unreasonable Totally unreasonable Don't know / not sure

Q16 What are the reasons for your answer? (Please write in below)

Additional (HMO) licensing fee

The current proposed fee for additional licensing is £850 to cover up to 5 years. The costs are higher for this scheme as there are a smaller number of properties that need to cover the costs for running the scheme. This equates to £170 per year or £3.27 per week with additional unit costs for larger properties. Details can be found in the Consultation document here: [Click here](#) . This is based on an approximation that there are around 200 properties that may fall under this type of scheme. An incentive of £50 is proposed to be given for 'early bird' applications (during first 3 months of the scheme introduction). An incentive of £150 is proposed to be given for those who are accredited with the Sefton Property Accreditation Scheme or a national landlord body such as the National Landlords Association (NLA) or Residential Landlords Association (RLA). Only one incentive can be awarded per application.

Q17 To what extent do you feel that a fee of £850 (equivalent to £170 per year or £3.27 per week) for up to five years is a reasonable figure if an additional (HMO) licensing scheme were to be introduced? (Please tick one box only)

Totally reasonable Fairly reasonable Fairly unreasonable Totally unreasonable Don't know / not sure

Q18 What are the reasons for your answer? (Please write in below)

Your experiences in Sefton

Q19 Thinking about privately rented properties you know of in the areas proposed for licensing, have you been affected by or witnessed anti social behaviour (such as noise, crime, litter etc) relating to these properties? (Please tick all that apply)

- Yes, affected by
- Yes, witnessed
- No
- Don't know
- Unaware of private rented properties in my area

Q20 Still thinking about privately rented properties you know of, do you think they are maintained to a good standard? (Please tick one box only)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q21 Thinking about the private landlords or their agents you know of in your area, to what extent would you say they act responsibly in letting, managing & maintaining properties? (Please tick one box only)

- All act responsibly
- Most act responsibly
- Some act responsibly
- None or very few act responsibly
- Don't know
- Unaware of private landlords or their agents in my area

Private Rented Tenant questions

Q22 How satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with the following in the last 12 months? (Please tick only one per row)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Q22a. bThe overall quality of your home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The overall repairs and maintenance of your home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The management of your home by your landlord or letting agent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The cleanliness and maintenance of any shared areas, such as kitchens, toilets, communal or outside areas (if applicable)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q23 To what extent have any of the following been an issue for you as a tenant in the last 12 months? (Please tick only one per row)

	Major issue	Minor issue	Not an issue
Q23a. Poor management of properties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Inadequate heating system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Damp or mould	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate fire safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disrepair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overcrowding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harassment from other tenants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harassment from landlord	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vermin or pests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rubbish or litter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ASB from other tenants e.g. noise/disturbance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drug use or dealing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Please write in below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Landlord experiences of renting properties in Sefton

Q24 If you are a member of the Sefton Property Accreditation Scheme or other recognised landlord body, please state which one(s)? (Please write in below)

Q25 In your experience, have you had any of the following problems with your tenants?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Rent arrears
- Damage to your property
- Noise
- Not keeping the property in good condition
- Rubbish / Litter issues
- Complaints from neighbours
- Other (Please write in below)

Q26 On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all a problem and 10 is a major problem, to what extent do you believe the following are problems in the areas of Sefton where licensing is proposed? (Please tick only one per row)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Q26. Low demand for housing (difficulty letting)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High turnover (tenants not staying long)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ASB (such as noise, litter or rubbish issues)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor property conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empty properties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor perception of private landlords or properties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor perception of tenants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q27 If any licensing scheme were to be implemented, then landlords would need to comply with the conditions of the licence. Have you read these licence conditions, as shown in Appendices 2 and 4 on the consultation webpage here: [Click here](#). (Please tick one box only)

- Yes
- No

Q28 Please use the box below to provide any comments on the conditions of the licence.

(Please write in below)

About you

This last section asks you some questions about yourself so we can fully understand different people's views and experiences.

Q29 How old are you? (Please tick one box only)

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and over
- Prefer not to say

Q30 Are you....? (Please tick one box only)

- Male
- Female

Q31 Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth? (Please tick one box only)

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q32 [Only answer if you are female] As a woman, are you.....? (Please tick all that apply)

- Pregnant
- On maternity leave
- Returning from maternity leave
- Prefer not to say
- Not applicable

Q33 What is your marital status? (Please tick one box only)

- Married
- Civil Partnership
- Divorced
- Single
- Widowed
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Q34 What is your current working status? (Please tick one box only)

- Employed (full or part time)
- Self-employed
- Out of work
- Looking after the home or family
- Unable to work/long term sick
- Retired
- Full time student
- Other

Q35 Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation? (Please tick one box only)

- Bisexual
- Gay/Lesbian
- Heterosexual/Straight
- Prefer not to say

Q36 What is your ethnic background? (Please tick one box only)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> White: English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British | <input type="radio"/> Asian: Pakistani |
| <input type="radio"/> White: Irish | <input type="radio"/> Asian: Bangladeshi |
| <input type="radio"/> White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller | <input type="radio"/> Asian: Chinese |
| <input type="radio"/> White: Other | <input type="radio"/> Asian: Other |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed: White and Black Caribbean | <input type="radio"/> Black: African |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed: White and Black African | <input type="radio"/> Black: Caribbean |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed: White and Asian | <input type="radio"/> Black: Other |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed: Other | <input type="radio"/> Other: Arab |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian: Indian | <input type="radio"/> Other: Other ethnic background |
| | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |

Q37 What is your religion or belief? (Please tick one box only)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Buddhist | <input type="radio"/> Sikh |
| <input type="radio"/> Christian | <input type="radio"/> Other |
| <input type="radio"/> Hindu | <input type="radio"/> No religion |
| <input type="radio"/> Jewish | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> Muslim | |

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as a person who has a disability. A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on (his or her) ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Q38 Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person? (Please tick one box only)

- Yes
 No

Q39 [If yes] Is your disability related to any of the following...? (Please tick all that apply)

- Learning disability (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)
 Long term illness/health condition (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, Multiple Sclerosis)
 Sensory impairment (e.g. Blind, Deaf, Glaucoma, hearing impairment, visual impairment)
 Mental health condition (e.g. anorexia, depression, schizophrenia)
 Physical impairment (e.g. amputation, wheelchair user, manual dexterity issues)
 Cognitive impairment (e.g. Autism, Aspergers Syndrome, head injury)
 Other (please write in below if you wish)

If you would like to be included in either the prize draw or be kept informed about the consultation by the Council, please tick the relevant option below:

- Tick here to be included in the prize draw.
- Tick here to be kept informed about the consultation by the Council

Public meetings about the consultation: M·E·L Research will be running a number of public meetings in the Sefton area during the consultation to provide more information on the licensing schemes being considered and to gather more in depth views from interested parties.

- Tick here if you would like to be kept informed about dates for meetings

(If yes) Please indicate your preference(s) for when you would like to attend a meeting
(Please tick all that apply)

- Weekday daytime
- Weekday evening
- Weekend

Q43 If you have ticked 'Yes' to any of the options, please include your contact details below. We will not be able to include you if you do not provide sufficient information. All personal information you provide will be held in accordance with provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and only used for administration for this consultation. It will not be disclosed to any third party.

Name:

Full Address

Email address:

Phone number(s):

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.