

Main updates to the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy 2026

The Policy title has changed from Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Licensing Policy to Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy. Information on HMOs and HMO licensing is now contained in a separate stand-alone policy.

Section 1 – The Council’s Framework for Enforcement Action

- Additional information has been added to explain the policy considers new duties introduced in the Renters’ Rights Act 2025.
- This section also explains the policy has been updated to reflect the June 2026 update to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

Section 2 – General Principles

- Information has been added to explain that enforcement decisions will be fair, independent and objective. Decisions will not be influenced by any protected characteristics of any party involved or affected by improper or undue pressure from any source.

Section 3 – Legislation

- Added Renters’ Right Act 2025 and legislation relating to HHSRS.

Section 4 – Scope and Service Standards

- Information about Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) has been removed from the policy as there is now a stand-alone HMO Policy. A weblink to the HMO Policy has been added.

Section 5 – Investigatory Powers and Powers of Entry

- This is a new section. It explains the investigatory powers the Council has relating to the collection of information and the entry of premises. Some of these powers are set out in this section.

Section 7 – Enforcement Powers Housing Act 2004

- The costs for remedial works to be carried out under an improvement notice have been updated. Minor works are classed as those costing up to £6,000 (previously £1,500). Intermediate works are classed as those costing between £6,001 and £15,000 (previously up to £7,000). Major works are classed as those costing over £15,000 (previously over £7,000).
- New sub-sections on injunctive actions, and enforced sales have been added.

Section 8 – Civil Penalties

- New information has been added to explain that the Council must publish a Civil Penalty Policy to comply with statutory guidance. A new draft Civil Penalties Policy has been developed as an independent standalone policy.

Section 10 – Rent Repayment Orders

- This section explains an application to the First-Tier Tribunal Property Chamber can be made for a RRO to recover payments related to housing where the landlord has committed a qualifying offence. A list of the qualifying offences has been added.
- It also explains that the Tribunal must be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that an offence has been committed.

Section 15 – Illegal Eviction and Harassment

- This section was previously named 'Illegal Eviction and Harassment and Retaliatory Evictions'. Information on retaliatory evictions has been removed due to the abolishment of section 21 evictions under the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

Section 16 – Mobile Homes and Caravan Sites

- This section has been renamed to include caravan sites (it was previously named 'Mobile Homes').
- A definition of 'relevant protected site' has been added to clarify which sites the Council can take enforcement action on under the Mobile Homes Act 2013.
- Information has been added to explain where a site licence is required.
- A definition of a caravan has been added.
- Instances where a caravan site licence is not required have been added.
- Information has been added to explain managers of sites are required to be a fit and proper person.

Section 17 – Equality and Diversity

- Information to explain the findings of the customer access review carried out on the policy has been added.

Annexes

- The 'Policy Guide to Mandatory Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation in Dartford' has been removed. It is now included in the Council's stand-alone HMO Policy.
- The HMO Licence Procedure has been removed. It is now included in the Council's stand-alone HMO Policy.
- The HMO Risk Assessment form has been removed. It is now included in the Council's stand-alone HMO Policy.
- The 'Guidance to HMO Amenity Standards' has been removed. It is now included in the Council's stand-alone HMO Policy.
- Information on disclosure and spent offences relating to license holders and managers of HMOs has been removed. It is now included in the Council's stand-alone HMO Policy.

- The 'Statement of Principles for the Issuing of Civil Penalties and Financial Penalties under the Electrical Safety Standards' has been removed. It is now included in the new Civil Penalties Policy.
- The 'Penalty Scoring Matrix' has been removed. It is now included in the new Civil Penalties Policy.