

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee - 2
September 2020

Subject: Housing Compliance and Enforcement - Performance in 2019/20

Report of: Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods

Summary

To provide Members with an update on demand for and performance of the Housing Compliance and Enforcement Team during 2019/20.

Recommendations

That Members note and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable):

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Good quality and well managed private rented homes will contribute to the sustainability of neighbourhoods, ensuring residents have a settled and stable platform to contribute and thrive.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Improving the private rented housing offer helps to attract and retain talent.
Working with both residents and businesses to support them in improving the neighbourhoods in which they live and work and socialise	Increasing the supply of good quality affordable homes for private rent provides access to quality accommodation in neighbourhoods where people are happier to settle for a longer period of time.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The right mix of quality energy efficient housing is needed to support growth and ensure that our growing population can live and work in the city and enjoy a good quality of life.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	This approach recognises the importance a balanced housing offer plays within a well connected city and the neighbourhoods within it. It

	seeks to create neighbourhoods where residents will choose to live and their housing needs and aspirations are met
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Contact Officers:

Name: Fiona Sharkey

Position: Head of Compliance, Enforcement and Community Safety

Telephone: 0161 234 1982

E-mail: f.sharkey@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Breige Cobane

Position: Neighbourhood Manager

Telephone: 07852 344795

E-mail: b.cobane@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Emma Broadbent

Position: Housing Compliance & Enforcement Manager

Telephone: 07908404386

E-mail: e.broadbent@manchester.gov.uk

Background Documents: Not applicable

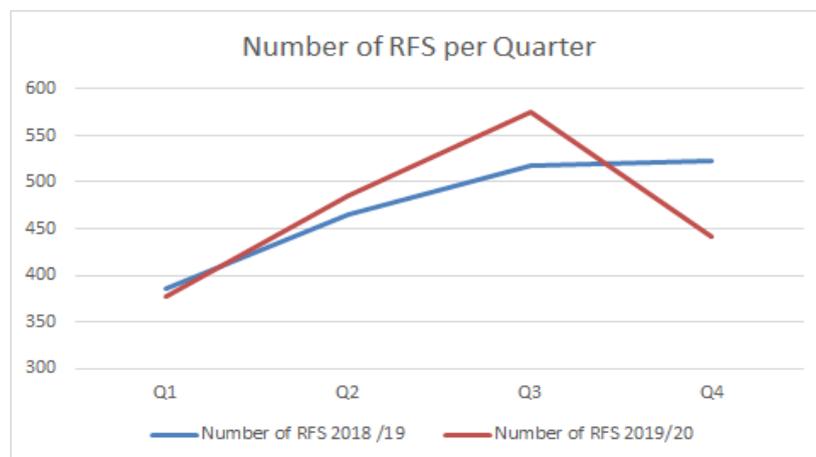
1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Housing Compliance & Enforcement Team sits within the wider Community Safety, Compliance and Enforcement Service and is responsible for ensuring that privately rented properties meet acceptable safety and management standards. The team manage the licensing of HMOs and Selective Licensing schemes, deal with complaints about disrepair in private rented housing and investigate allegations of unlawful eviction and landlord harassment.
- 1.2 This report sets out the key areas of demand and how the team performed in 2019/20. This report also sets out the changes in demand in April, May and June 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.3 The workload of the team includes a combination of planned regulatory work such as licensing inspection programmes; reactive work such as investigating complaints from tenants and proactive project work dealing with Rogue Landlords.
- 1.4 The Team, as with the Service, takes an Our Manchester approach to achieving compliance, working on the principle that the vast majority of Landlords in Manchester want to do the right thing and our approach to achieving compliance includes working with Landlords and giving them the chance to get it right.

2.0 Reactive Demand

- 2.1 In 2019/20 the service received 1,880 requests for service (RFS). This is compared to 1,892 in 2018/19. The number of requests for services remains fairly consistent year on year.

2.2 Figure 1: RFS Volume comparison



There was a small reduction in service requests in quarter 4, probably due to less activity just before lockdown in March. The increase in quarter 3 is less easy to explain and trends will continue to be monitored.

The case studies below illustrate the type of reactive work undertaken by the team.

Case Study 1: A case was referred by Adult Social Care about the poor conditions of a privately rented property in North Manchester. On inspection of the property, it was kept in an unhygienic condition due to the hoarding of their belongings and there was an issue in the bathroom with the toilet leaking. The Housing Compliance and Enforcement officer served a legal notice on the landlord to fix the toilet, which she complied with, however the team was unable to take any action in the case of the hoarding. The officer then worked with the social services crisis clean team to help clean the property to improve the living conditions for the elderly residents until alternative and more suitable accommodation was found with a local social landlord the following month. In partnership the two teams worked together with the landlord, to improve the conditions in the property.

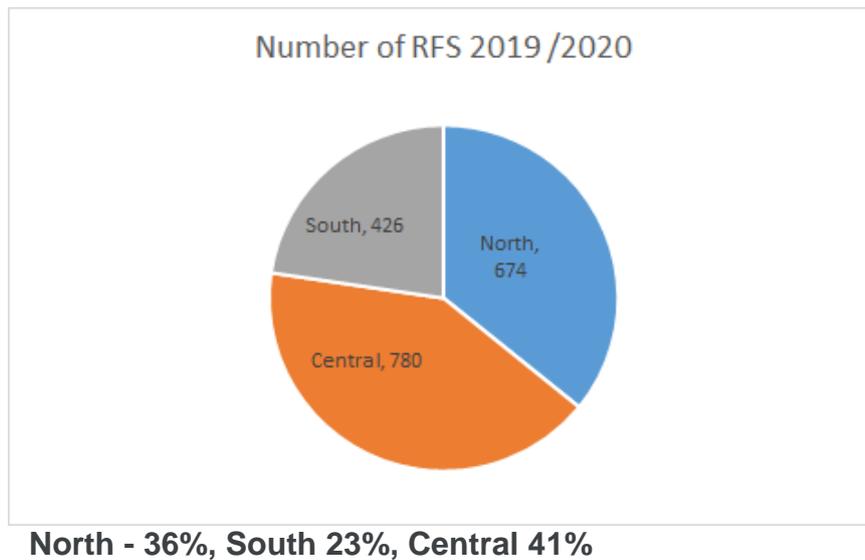
Case Study 2: The council received a complaint about a water leak next to the lighting pendant in a flat. It was unknown where the leak was coming from and who was responsible. The Housing Compliance and Enforcement Officer liaised with the landlord to ensure that the lighting pendant was switched off that day to prevent any shocks and then proceeded to work with the landlord and her managing agents, the owner of the flat above and the manager of the block of flats. After extensive exploratory work to establish the source of the leak, it was eventually found to be a loose waste water pipe in the kitchen to the flat above. By liaising with the owner, this pipe was fixed and the leak stopped. Once the ceiling had dried in the customer's flat, the officer arranged with the landlord to reinstate the lighting pendant and any damage caused by the investigation to be repaired. With the officer liaising and consulting with all interested parties and by working together the issue was resolved in a speedy manner without the need for formal notices to be served.

Case Study 3: The council received a complaint about the lack of internal lighting to an address in Rusholme. The lighting circuit had been disconnected from the electricity supply by an electrician due to it being unsafe and the landlord had not taken any action to reinstate the lighting when the complaint was made. An inspection of the property was carried out by a Housing Compliance and Enforcement Officer and Emergency Remedial Notice was served at the inspection for the lighting circuit to be reinstated. The notice was referred to the Council's Environmental Crimes Team for them to action the notice and reinstate the lighting to the property. The Council reinstated the lighting following on from the service of the legal notice and has started to recover the costs of the works from the landlord.

3.0 Service Requests (Areas and Categories of complaint)

- 3.1 The Council received 1,880 requests for the financial year 2019 / 2020, with most of the complaints being in the central wards (780 requests for service).

3.2 **Figure 2: The number of complaints split between areas**

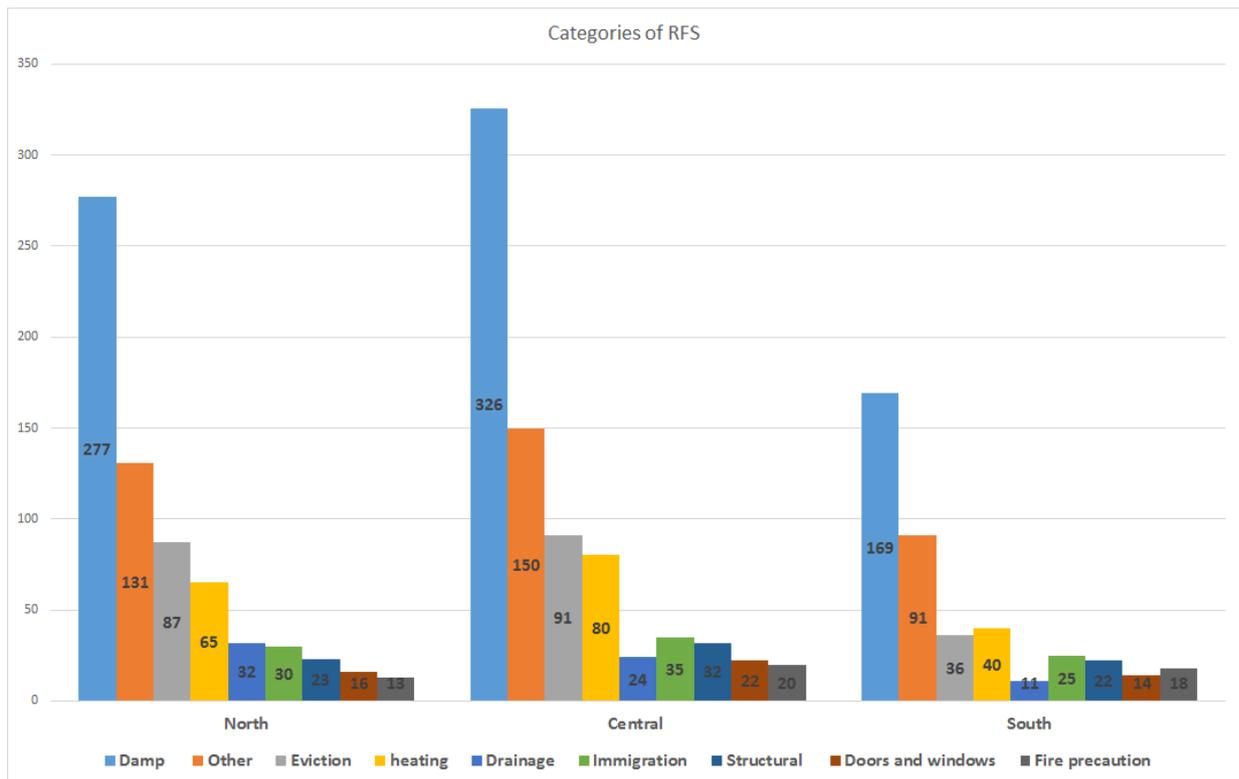


3.3 The Housing Compliance and Enforcement Team has several complaint categories that cover both disrepair and landlord harassment. The three main categories of complaints received are:

- dampness and leaks (772 requests, 41%)
- heating and hot water (185 requests, 10%)
- unlawful eviction (214 requests, 11%)

3.4 The housing compliance and enforcement team offers a chargeable service for people who are sponsoring people coming into the country to ensure the condition and suitability of the property to accommodate more people. The sponsor uses this information as part of their home office application. The team carried out 90 of these inspections.

Figure3: Shows number of RFS received by area



4.0 Proactive Activity - Rogue Landlords Team

4.1 The Rogue Landlord Team of three officers was established as a result of Home Office funding. The Team has inspected 242 properties between 01 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, this has resulted in the following interventions:

57 Improvement Notices Served.

16 Prohibition Orders.

31 Other formal notices served including EPA and Building Control.

3 Final Civil Penalties issued totalling £55,000.

The case studies below illustrate the type of work undertaken by the rogue landlords' team.

Case Study 4 : North

A flat above a shop in Cheetham Hill was visited with the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS). A male was found sleeping at the property. The only access to the residential property was via the takeaway with shutters at the front. The only means of escape was via a back door accessed through the high risk commercial kitchen. There was no fire detection at the property. The risks to a resident sleeping in the upstairs was imminent, with no way of vacating in the event of a fire without going through the commercial kitchen. Without any fire detection there was little chance of any residents being alerted to a fire early enough to escape before the risks became serious. Officers worked alongside GMFRS to prohibit the use of upstairs for sleeping accommodation. The male at the property was supported via colleagues in Housing Solutions to find alternative accommodation. An enforcement notice was served on the landlord of the property

to ensure adequate means of escape and appropriate fire detection was installed. Officers from food safety followed up with the takeaway business concerning hygiene issues.

Case Study 5: Central

A building on Hyde Road, Gorton consisting of six flats with poor fire separation and a substantial amount of disrepair including dangerous electrics posing a considerable risk to the residents of the flats was identified by the rogue landlord team as part a proactive day of action in September 2019. Officers worked with the landlord to improve standards which included installation of an adequate fire alarm system that would alert the occupiers in case of a fire, as well as making the electrical installation safe. In August 2020 there was a fire in one of the flats caused by a faulty appliance purchased by the tenant. The new fire system provided an early warning for the occupiers and enabled a safe evacuation. The GMFRS officer commented after the incident that the fire could have turned out to be much more serious and caused fatalities if the Council did not intervene in September 2019.

Case Study 6: South

Following a referral from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) regarding overcrowding and poor living conditions at flats above commercial properties in Wythenshawe, a full housing inspection was carried out at all properties. Both substantial and minor disrepair items were identified in the properties including; no working toilet, a broken front door being held together by padlocks, no working kitchen, a lack of hot water, broken windows and electrical hazards, amongst others. Enforcement Notices were served on all relevant properties to ensure appropriate improvements were made.

Working proactively to promote the rogue landlord team, officers have made links with officers from different service areas such as GMP, GMFRS and Immigration enforcement. Creating these links has helped other services understand what we can do to improve living conditions and where to refer properties they are concerned about, as well as improved joint working to tackle issues with another agency.

5.0 Formal Enforcement Action

- 5.1 Officers serve a range of enforcement notices to tackle housing disrepair where landlords have failed to engage with initial informal requests from both the tenant and the council. Failure to comply with an enforcement notice can result in the council carrying out required repairs in default with works and an establishment charged invoiced to the landlord and assigned as debt against the property where landlords fail to pay. Notices served under the Housing Act 2004 are accompanied by a demand notice for the officers time. These are charged at £300 per notice. 290 enforcement notices were served in 2019/20 with 137 demand notices resulting in £41,100 in fines.
- 5.2 For the most serious offences or where landlords continue to fail in their duties cases are progressed to prosecution or civil penalty as an alternative to prosecution.

In Manchester we have successfully prosecuted a number of landlords and agents for Housing Act offences. Prosecutions are generally resource intensive and can often be a lengthy process. In some cases the low level of fine was not a strong enough deterrent. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced Civil Penalties of up to £30,000 from 6th April 2017 as an alternative to prosecution for certain offences under the Housing Act 2004.

5.3 Figure 4: Number of Civil Penalties issued in 2019/20

Civil Penalty types 2019/2020	Total No.	Total fines /charges /outcomes
Breach of HMO Management Regulations	4	Civil penalties. Total fines £65,000
Non-compliance with Improvement Notice	4	Civil penalties. Total fines £47,350
Breach of HMO licensing	4	Civil penalties. Total fines £45,500
Operating a HMO without a licence	8	Civil penalties. Total fines £61,850
Failure to obtain selective licence	6	Civil penalties. Total fines £22,500
Grand Total	26	All Civil Penalties. Total fines £242,200

5.4 The level of fine is determined in line with the Council's civil penalty policy looking at the culpability of the offender and the harm caused. As some of the fines are substantial, it is having a real impact and making landlords/agents take note of what their legal obligations are to prevent any further breaches.

5.5 There are a number of appeals against the civil penalties currently pending with the First Tier Tribunal, which may impact on the overall fine figure above. Whilst some landlords have paid their fines or agreed payment plans, there are a number of cases currently with legal debt recovery to pursue the fines.

6.0 Selective Licensing

6.1 The Selective Licensing Pilot areas have now been in operation for three years in Crumpsall, over two years in Moss Side and almost two years in Moston and Old Moat.

6.2 Selective licensing is intended to respond to problems of poor property management, crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) within a defined geographical area. All privately rented properties within a designated area require a licence, with some exemptions for example property rented to family members, Registered Provider and Council run housing.

6.3 Manchester’s selective licensing areas encompass approximately 2,000 private rented properties. Each Selective Licensing scheme is designated for 5 years. The pilot areas and duration of each scheme are as follows:

Crumpsall 13 March 2017 - 12 March 2022
 Moss Side 8 Jan 2018 - 7 Jan 2023
 Moston 23 Apr 2018 - 22 Apr 2023
 Old Moat 23 Apr 2018 - 22 Apr 2023

At the end of a designation, the scheme will cease to have effect, unless it is renewed.

6.4 The following table provides information on the number of selective licence applications received, the number of licences issued and the number of compliance inspections carried out to date.

Pilot Area	Applications Received	Licences Granted	Compliance Inspections Completed
Crumpsall	352	351	99
Moston	306	287	60
Moss Side	1022*	923	116
Old Moat	257*	180	6
TOTAL	1,937	1741	281

* There were approximately 110 applications which were initially received for selective licensing in the Old Moat and Moss Side areas which were passported over to HMO licensing when the extension to HMO licensing came into effect in 2018.

6.5 During compliance inspections officers assess property conditions under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as well as assessing compliance against licence conditions. The HHSRS is a risk-based evaluation tool used by officers as an evaluation of the potential risks to health and safety from any deficiency identified in domestic dwellings, in order to take action to reduce/remove threat of harm to occupants.

6.6 The following table sets out findings following compliance inspections.

Pilot Area	Fully Compliant	Broadly Compliant	Non-Compliant
Crumpsall	14	61	23
Moston	12	45	4

Moss Side	21	71	6
Old Moat	1	3	1

* A number of inspections are ongoing and therefore a number of outcomes are yet to be determined.

6.7 Case Studies

Case Study 7: Compliance Inspection in Moston (Winnie Street) – NORTH

A compliance inspection was carried out to an end terrace property at Winnie Street in Moston to check whether the landlord was compliant with the licence conditions and check the property was in a good condition.

The property had been selected for a routine compliance inspection. On inspection a number of disrepair matters were found, including minor rot to some of the single glazed window frames, no fire detection in the property, no lock to rear external entrance door, all internal doors on the ground floor had non-safety glass and door handles missing from internal doors.

A hazard warning letter was sent to the managing agents highlighting the defects and requiring them to carry out repair work to the hazards found in the property. The property was re-inspected within 2 months of the selective licensing team's intervention.

All windows were replaced with new double glazed units, fire detection fitted to both floors, all non-safety glass removed from internal ground floor doors, new handles fitted to internal doors where required and a new lock was fitted to the rear external entrance door.

The tenants who initially wanted to leave the house decided to stay as it was much warmer in the property since the replacement of the windows. They also felt safer as the landlord was required to install fire detectors and a new lock to the rear door.

Case study 8: Investigation of unlicensed premises in Moss Side- CENTRAL

An unlicensed property was identified on Lindum Street in Moss Site and investigated by the Housing Compliance & Enforcement team. Despite several letters informing the landlord that the property needed a selective licence, the landlord failed to apply for a licence.

The visit to the property confirmed the house was rented out and it had been rented from the start of the designation back in January 2018. Further investigation revealed that the property also had a managing agent. Both the landlord and the manager were interviewed under caution. The landlord admitted during the interview that he had failed to apply for a licence. The manager admitted negligence in ensuring the property he was managing was licensed under the selective licensing regime.

The landlord submitted an application following the interview, however as evidence of an offence had been obtained, the landlord was issued with a financial penalty of £5,000 for failing to apply for a licence and the manager was fined £1,500 for failing to ensure that the property he was managing was licensed.

7.0 HMO Licensing

- 7.1 There are currently 2,103 Mandatory Licensed HMO premises in Manchester. All new applications for a Mandatory HMO Licence receive a pre-licensing inspection prior to a licence being issued, whereas existing licensed premises receive a compliance inspection within the licence period prior to a renewal licence being issued.
- 7.2 At the time of lockdown 73 pre-licensing inspections were outstanding and the team are prioritising these over summer where many student properties are expected to be empty. The use of virtual inspections is being piloted, in particular for those properties that have already been inspected and officers are checking completion of works. Initial feedback has been positive.

Case Study 9: Compliance Inspection - North

A HMO licensing compliance inspection was undertaken at a large B&B located on Collyhurst Street. The purpose of the inspection was to check the conditions of the licence were being adhered to and identify any housing related hazards.

Upon completing the inspection of the habitable areas the licence holder was to provide access to the cellar, which seemed to cause some concern and reluctance. While inspecting the cellar a male was found to be living in a windowless room in an area impossible to escape safely in the event of a fire. An Emergency Prohibition Order was issued to prevent the room from being used as a bedroom and the male was able to find alternative accommodation. The licence holder was issued with a Civil Penalty for £15,500 for placing the occupier in danger and breaching conditions of the licence, by allowing more persons than permitted on the licence.

Without the compliance inspection we would not have been made aware of the occupier living in the cellar and have potentially prevented a dangerous situation. All HMO licensed properties are inspected during the period of the licence to ensure compliance with licensing conditions, HMO and safety standards.

Case Study 10: Investigation into unlicensed HMO Longsight- CENTRAL

Following notification by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS), that there had been a small fire at a property on Meller Road in Longsight, Officers from the Housing Compliance and Enforcement Team visited the property.

During the visit it was discovered that the property was a HMO occupied by 6 people including a family with 2 adults and 1 child living in one bedroom in the attic for which

they paid £370 per month, the other occupiers each paid £320 per month meaning that the landlord had a potential income of £1330 per month.

As the property was occupied by 5 or more persons it should have been licensed under part 2 of the Housing Act 2004.

The visit highlighted concerns regarding the safety of the occupiers due to damaged/ill fitting fire doors, inner rooms, electrical hazards, missing handrails to staircases and a total lack of communal dining space which meant that the tenants would have to eat their meals in their bedrooms. The landlord was also unable to provide satisfactory safety certificates.

An Improvement Notice was served on the landlord instructing that he must remove the category 1 hazard and reduce or remove the category 2 hazards.

The visit also identified breaches under the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006.

The result of the intervention meant that the family living in the attic were able to find alternative suitable accommodation, the landlord was issued with a Civil Penalty of £7,500 and the occupation of the property was limited to a maximum of 4 persons as it was not suitable to be occupied by 6 persons.

Case Study 11: Inspections during lockdown - SOUTH

Pre-licensing inspections were carried out at 3 HMO's owned by the same landlord in March 2020 just prior to lockdown. The properties were found to be broadly compliant with the requirements, but some minor hazards were found and remedial works identified.

The officer kept in contact with the owner during lockdown and once the restrictions started to ease, she was able to get the required improvements carried out.

Once we had been notified that all the work was complete, it was agreed that as the properties were low risk, the revisits could be carried out by way of virtual inspections. This meant the agent being present in the properties and making a video call so that the officer could ask the agent to direct the camera at the matters the officer wanted to check, rather than physically attending the properties.

Some difficulties were encountered, such as loss of signal and poor video quality, but these were easily overcome by discussions with the agent who then took photos and videos which were sent later by email. Ultimately the officer was able to be satisfied that all the matters had been addressed without physically attending the property, thereby reducing the risk of potential Coronavirus transmission for both the officer and the agent.

7.2 Review of Policy and HMO Standards: The Private Rented Sector (PRS) Licensing Policy has recently been reviewed and updated to give more clarity

between HMO and Selective Licensing, and to reflect legislative changes (notably the Housing and Planning Act 2016) and good practice.

- 7.3 The HMO standards are based on a variety of legislation/good practice and are intended to provide landlords and tenants with guidance on the Council's expectations and its interpretation of relevant legislation. These documents were reviewed against other local authorities in particular Core Cities and GMCA.
- 7.4 A public consultation is ongoing and closes 25 September 2020; following this the policy and standards will be submitted to the Executive for consideration.

8.0 Illegal Evictions and Landlord Harassment

- 8.1 259 complaints were received in 2019/2020 in relation to illegal eviction and landlord harassment, compared to 224 in 2018/19. 214 of the complaints related to tenants who had been asked to leave their property by the landlord.
- 8.2 In the majority of cases, residents remained in their home and were not evicted from the property, following the Housing Compliance and Enforcement Team making the landlord aware of the due legal process for eviction and the potential enforcement action that could be taken should they not follow this.
- 8.3 To ensure that tenants get the correct advice and support to help them remain in their home or to help with looking for alternative accommodation, the Housing Compliance and Enforcement Team works in partnership with the Councils Housing Solution Team.
- 8.4 In light of the impacts of coronavirus it is anticipated that the council will see an increase in both legal and illegal evictions. The Housing team has reviewed working practices across GM and with other core cities to ensure that it has a robust process for taking forward any potential illegal eviction cases for prosecution, and has strengthened its joint working with Housing Solution colleagues to ensure that every customer is helped the correct way and to prevent duplication across different departments within the Council.

9.0 Electrical Safety Checks

- 9.1 The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 came into force on 1st June 2020. Following public consultation the government clearly set out that these regulations are designed to strengthen existing requirements, make electrical safety consistent across tenures, and make electrical safety more transparent to tenants.
- 9.2 The duties imposed on landlords (Part 2, Regulation 3) are as follows:
- ensuring electrical safety standards are met,
 - ensuring every electrical installation is tested by a qualified person no less than 5 yearly and a report obtained,

- providing copies of such reports to all tenants following the inspection,
- retaining copies of reports until the next inspection is due and providing copies to the next inspector,
- supplying a copy of the most recent report to any new tenant or prospective tenant,
- ensuring where a report requires further investigative or remedial work that this is carried out within 28 days or less, and providing further copies of such reports to tenants until the matter is resolved,
- providing any such report to the Council within 7 days upon request.

These requirements apply to new tenancies from 1st July 2020 and to all existing tenancies from 1st April 2021.

9.3 Electrical installation reports were already a requirement for HMO properties and obtained as part of the HMO licence application process, reports were also requested but not a mandatory part of the selective licensing process. This legislation now formalises the requirement for all PRS properties and will not only become a requirement of the selective licencing application, but also requested as part of every reactive case the team deals with.

9.4 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 is the enabling legislation for the regulations. The powers conferred on local authorities include;

- Requesting a copy of electrical safety reports in writing and receive a copy within 7 days,
- Serving a Remedial Notice requiring landlord to carry out certain works within 28 days (current Improvement Notice under the Housing act 2004 doesn't become operative until AFTER 28 days appeal period has expired)
- The LA can carry out the remedial works quickly with consent of the tenants,
- Serve demand notices to recoup costs of works in default.
- Serving a financial penalties of up to £30,000 for breaches of the regulations and to use this money towards its costs/expenses in carrying out any of its enforcement in relation to the PRS.

9.5 Electrical Safety complaints represent 3.5% of the categories of requests for service into the housing team, but more often feature as an additional factor where complaints are received regarding multiple issues. These powers should provide substantial support to resolving these issues with monies recovered from financial penalties being used to further assist the Housing Compliance and enforcement team to carry out more targeted enforcement work.

9.6 Next Steps:

- An education and awareness campaign will be undertaken by updating the Council web pages with new requirements, as well as emailing out to all licensed landlords/mailling lists outlining new requirements.
- Reviewing data to check for licensed landlords where electrical reports have not been provided.

- Request copies of electrical reports for any domestic private rented properties where concerns have been raised – proactive and/or request for service

10.0 EPC Certificates and Carbon Reduction

- 10.1 An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required, whenever a property is built, sold or rented. The certificate contains information about the property's energy use, typical energy costs and provides recommendations about how to reduce energy use and save money. The energy performance of a building is rated on a scale of A to G, A being highly efficient, G being low efficiency.
- 10.2 The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 (as amended) set the minimum energy efficiency rating for all private rented properties and make it unlawful for properties with an energy performance rating of F or G to be let. Essentially a landlord who rents a property with an EPC rating below E is required to undertake work to improve its energy performance.

From 1st April 2020, a landlord of a domestic private rented property with an EPC rating of F or G must not continue to let the property until works have been carried out to improve the energy efficiency rating to an E or above. There are certain exemptions to work being required including where cost implications exceed savings expected over 25 years.

- 10.3 Landlords that rent out a property with an EPC rating below an E could be fined up to £5,000.
- 10.4 Next Steps:
- Work has commenced to initially review all licensed PRS properties in Manchester against these requirements, using information from the National EPC register. Any rented addresses with a rating below E will then be contacted on a programmed basis. Officers have also begun to request EPC certificates during all reactive, programmed and proactive inspections.
 - HMOs: As part of the mandatory HMO licence application process we ask whether landlords have a valid EPC in place and if so what the rating is. There is a current licence condition requiring landlords to keep on file the original and provide upon request to the council. This process will be formalised to ensure officers obtain EPC information and take appropriate action where it is either not in place or has a rating below E.
 - Selective: As part of the application process we ask whether landlords have a valid EPC in place and if so what the rating is. There is no selective licence condition pertaining to EPC's, this could be considered for future designations.
 - Inspections: the regulations can be enforced alongside issues identified following an inspection carried out under Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), either when responding to requests for service,

(in particular when investigating excess cold and damp and mould complaints), proactively, or at licensed property inspections.

11.0 Impact of Pandemic

- 11.1 Service requests in relation to disrepair in the private rented sector are now starting to increase following a reduction through lockdown. Resource in the reactive team has been bolstered to deal with any backlog in issues by keeping proactive rogue landlord work on hold for the time being. Visits are being carried out in line with health and safety risk assessments to properties where there is an imminent risk to health or properties where disrepair has been ongoing for a long period without resolution.
- 11.2 Pre licensing and compliance inspections are now starting to resume across HMO and Selective Licensing. The Team are exploring new ways of working to ensure properties are compliant which will involve trialling virtual inspections. Any property considered to be high risk will receive a physical inspection. Landlords will also be provided with a property checklist prior to the inspection to ensure they can carry out their own checks and address any hazards beforehand. A landlord guide has been produced and is available as Appendix 1. During lockdown landlord licensing applications had reduced significantly however work to resume progress on applications and to investigate suspect properties should see applications start to increase again.
- 11.3 The team (along with colleagues in homelessness) are monitoring reports of illegal evictions and landlord harassment and have so far seen a small increase in cases in this area. The National Residential Landlords Association has worked with support from GMCA to produce a guide for landlords on managing debt. This is being shared widely with landlords.

<https://news.rla.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/rent-arrears-management-guidance.pdf>

12.0 Conclusion

- 12.1 This report outlines the work undertaken by the Housing compliance and Enforcement Team in 2019/ 20 and sets out the impact so far in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 12.2 The case studies provided illustrate the meaningful impact the work of the team has on improving property standards and ensuring Manchester residents in the private rented sector have a safe place to live.
- 12.3 Much more work needs to be done however, and the importance of retaining resource and a proactive approach within the team cannot be underestimated. The Team are linked closely to the Private Rented Sector Strategy and will continue to work with colleagues in Strategic Housing and Homelessness to deliver this strategy once approved.