

Case study: Rogue landlords

Private landlords are an important provider of housing for local people. The Public Health and Housing team work proactively to support landlords to improve the standard of privately rented accommodation and to raise awareness of the expected standard with tenants, so they too can work with their landlords. There are however a small minority of irresponsible rogue landlords who knowingly rent out accommodation that is unlicensed, substandard and/or unsafe and for whom the current sanctions are not a sufficient deterrent.

Following a decision at Joint Cabinet in January 2018, West Suffolk councils began taking the first steps to adopting new powers to combat rogue landlords under new powers in the Housing and Planning Act 2016. A new policy is therefore required for us to make use some of the new powers.

The focus of the new policy is on tackling and dealing with the very worst private landlords, and deterring any rogue landlords from starting to operate in west Suffolk, while working with those that wish to grow the sector through much needed, better quality housing.

Consultation on the new enforcement routes was carried out in early 2018. Some of the enforcement routes include the option of civil penalty fines, rent repayment orders and banning orders for non-compliance with certain Housing Act 2004 offences, as an alternative to taking a prosecution for the very worst landlords.

Wherever possible, West Suffolk councils take a staged approach to enforcement to ensure solutions are initially sought through advice, co-operation and agreement. The new legislation provides a streamlined alternative to prosecution, albeit with same level of evidence and an appeals process in place, which is designed to deal with cash for rent landlords working outside of the law.

The new policy will help us protect tenants and compliant landlords by targeting the small minority of rogue landlords for whom previous enforcement has not been effective. The aim is to drive up standards in the private rented sector and improve the quality of existing housing for our residents.

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils



West Suffolk
working together