

Landlord newsletter

A newsletter for HMO landlords, managing agents and letting agents in Camden



Issue 6 – Spring 2021

HMO licensing renewal special edition

This is our third newsletter since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and we hope this newsletter continues to find you and your families well.

Following on from our last newsletter, Camden's additional licensing scheme has been renewed for a further five years and came into force on 8 December 2020. If you hold an existing HMO licence you will need to know in good time what to do before your current licence expires. This newsletter contains some useful information about how and when to renew your licence, what information we will need from you, licence fee discounts and the circumstances when a one year licence may be issued.

What is a 'renewal application' ?

You can only renew a licence if you are the current licence holder of an **unexpired** licence.

If you wish to change licence holder, you will need to make a new HMO licence application and pay the new application fee.

We are aiming to send a renewal reminder around two months before expiry. However this is not a legal requirement and ultimately it is the landlords responsibility to renew their licences before they expire. Please check your current licence to see when it needs renewing.

How much is a renewal and do I get a discount?

A discounted licence fee is available for qualifying renewal applications. The total fee for a renewal application is £1,130 whilst a new application is £1,300.

There is a further discount of £100 on licensing fees for accredited private landlords. To get this discount you will need to have completed a recognised qualification for landlords and provide proof of your accredited membership with your application.

Please note the HMO application fees are now split into two stages (Part 1 and Part 2). The whole fee can be paid with the initial application or the fees can be paid in stages: 'Part 1' with the application and 'Part 2' before the final licence is granted. A licence will not be issued until both parts are paid.

- [Fees discounts and refunds](#) For our current licence fees and policy
- [London Landlord Accreditation Scheme](#) For online accreditation training courses

What do I need to provide with my renewal application?

You will need to provide the following with your renewal application:

1. Copies of the current annual gas certificate (if applicable) and a satisfactory domestic electrical installation condition report (EICR) dated within the last 5 years
2. Certificates for automatic fire detection alarm systems and emergency lighting installations (where applicable).
3. Evidence all the works required on your current licence have been completed, eg certificates, photographs, invoices.
4. Up-to-date floor plans. The floor plans must show the layout, accurate room dimensions, amenities available and location of fire precautions.
5. A declaration there have not been any major changes to the property since the last licence was issued, or outline any that have occurred, including any works carried out to comply with licence conditions.

It is extremely important that landlords applying to renew their HMO licences provide all the information and documents in support of their application. We need this information as part of the re-licensing process in order to determine the application.

If you are a current licence holder you are therefore urged to look through the schedule of licence conditions in your existing licence to ensure that any works required are completed.

How do I apply for a renewal?

Providing you applied for the previous licence then the process of renewal will be straightforward. As the original applicant you will be able to access your original application via the Camden HMO portal and renew your licence. You will not have to fill in the property details again and you will be able to update your details, or the details of any interested parties, if needed. You will also automatically qualify for the £200 discount which is applied to the first stage 'Part 1' fee.

If the person making the application is not the same person then a new HMO portal account will need to be set up. In these cases a new application will have to be made. However, as long as the licence holder is the same and the application is made before the expiry of the original licence, the discounted fee will still apply (the 'Part 2' fee will not be applied when the final licence is granted).

For further guidance on making a new or renewal application please visit: camden.gov.uk/hmolicensing

What are the penalties for failing to obtain a new licence?

A 'renewal application' cannot be made after the expiry of an existing licence. On expiry of a licence, the property will no longer be licensed. Not only is this a criminal offence (providing the property is still a licensable HMO) it will cost you more to re-license.

The penalties for operating a licensable HMO without a licence once an existing licence has expired are the same as for failing to apply for a licence in the first place. These include:-

- Failure to obtain a licence – an unlimited fine or a civil penalty of up to £30,000
- The tenant(s) are eligible for a rent repayment order
- Interim Management Orders

You must therefore renew your licence before it expires to avoid any of the above happening. In addition, if you apply to re-license after your current licence has expired you may be issued with a **one year licence**.

One year licences

In designating our new additional licensing scheme we introduced a new policy where in certain circumstances licences will be issued for a one year period only. For example, failing to renew a previous licence before its expiry; failing to have obtained or provide copies of valid/required safety certificates; failing to have completed works required by a previous licence or permitting an excessive number of occupants, are amongst some of the circumstances likely to result in a licence being granted for a one year period only.

There is no reduction in fee when a one year licence is granted. Upon expiry of a one year licence a renewal application would need to be submitted, together with payment of the appropriate application fee.

The circumstances and considerations that could result in a licence being issued for a one year period are set out in [Camden's Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy](#)

Will the licence conditions on my renewed licence be the same as before?

The conditions specified in your current licence concerning the proper management of the property will be broadly the same in any new licence that may be granted. Any particular works specified as conditions of your existing licence should have been completed and therefore in most cases, it should not be necessary to include these conditions again.

Since the introduction of Camden's first additional licensing scheme our HMO standards have been reviewed and updated. When renewing your licence, we will assess the property against our [HMO standards](#) and may add conditions in order to meet our current standards. You will be consulted on the contents of your renewed licence before the final licence is issued



Electrical safety standards

The [Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector \(England\) Regulations 2020](#) impose legal duties on landlords requiring them to meet national standards for electrical safety. Landlords must ensure the electrical installations in their rental properties are inspected and tested every five years, fix any serious problems and supply a copy of the report to their tenants and council.

....and HMO applications

When you apply for a new or renewed licence we will require a copy of the latest 'Electrical Installation Condition Report' (EICR) certificate issued within the last five years.

Where an EICR identifies any parts of the installation, or any fittings, as C1 or C2 defects the report will classify the installation as 'Unsatisfactory'. Remedial works must be carried out as a priority. If the failings are not addressed they will be included as licence conditions. Any C3 observations should be given due consideration

Failure to provide an EICR with your HMO application, or failure to address any breaches identified in the EICR within the timescales given, will result in you being issued with a one year licence.

Competent electricians can be found online and [Electrical Safety First](#) and the [ECP](#) are useful places to start.

Renewals and the new mandatory HMO definition

The description of HMOs requiring a mandatory licence was changed in October 2018. The new rules removed the requirement for the property to have at least three storeys.

If you hold an additional HMO licence that now meets the new mandatory HMO definition, you can apply for a 'renewal' providing the licence holder has not changed and the current licence has not expired. After receipt of your renewal application we will update the record from 'additional' to 'mandatory'.



Section 257 HMOs in Camden

These are properties which have been converted into self-contained flats but the conversion works do not comply with the 1991 Building Regulation standards (or later).

Under the renewed scheme, the designation of licensable 'section 257' HMOs was changed. Section 257 HMOs are now only licensable '**where less than half the flats are owner-occupied**'. A small number of section 257 HMOs may have come out of the licensing requirement whilst there will be some which are now required to be licensed under the new scheme.

If you have any questions about the status of your section 257 HMO licence, please visit our [website](#) or contact the HMO licensing team on the contact details below.

If you own, rent or manage an HMO you need to make sure you have an HMO licence and comply with the conditions. Our [webpages](#) contain useful information and if you still have any questions, please call or email the HMO licensing team on the contact details below.

Previous issues of newsletters and information from landlord events are now available on the [news & events page](#) of the HMO webpages.

Upcoming training April/May 2021

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards – Landlords

Please visit [Retrofit Webinar Series](#)



✉ Contact the team

If you would like any further information concerning your HMO licence, or to report an unlicensed HMO, please contact the HMO licensing team: hmolicensing@camden.gov.uk or phone the team on: 020 7974 5969.