

Halton Borough Council

Proposed Selective Licensing Scheme

Tenant Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs explain what the proposed Selective Licensing scheme could mean for tenants living in privately rented homes in the proposed areas. No final decision has been made. The Council is consulting before deciding whether to introduce the scheme.

1. About the proposal

What is Selective Licensing?

Selective Licensing is a legal scheme that councils can introduce in specific areas to help improve standards in privately rented homes. If a scheme is introduced, most private landlords in the designated areas would need to apply for a licence and meet conditions about safety, repairs, management and tenant communication.

Why is Halton Borough Council considering Selective Licensing?

The Council is considering Selective Licensing because evidence shows that in some parts of Halton, private renting overlaps with poor property conditions, older housing stock, lower energy efficiency, deprivation, affordability pressures and tenant vulnerability. The aim is to improve housing standards, support responsible landlords and protect tenants.

Which areas are proposed for the scheme?

The proposed areas are Central and West Bank ward, Appleton ward, Mersey and Weston ward, Bridgewater ward, and LSOA E01012379 in Highfield. More detailed maps are included in the consultation document.

Has a final decision already been made?

No. The Council is consulting before making any final decision. Feedback from tenants, landlords, residents, businesses, community organisations and partners will be considered before the Council decides whether to introduce the scheme, amend the proposal or not proceed.

2. What it could mean for tenants

Would I need to apply for a licence as a tenant?

No. Tenants would not need to apply for a licence and would not be responsible for paying the licence fee to the Council. The responsibility to apply for a licence would sit with the landlord or the person managing the property.

Would my landlord need a licence?

If the scheme is introduced, most privately rented homes in the proposed areas would need a licence unless they are exempt by law or already require a mandatory HMO licence. This would include many homes let to a single household, properties occupied by two unrelated sharers, and some smaller HMOs.

Would the scheme apply to council or housing association homes?

No. Selective Licensing is aimed at privately rented homes. Properties let by public sector bodies or registered providers of social housing are generally exempt.

Would the scheme mean my home is automatically inspected?

Not necessarily. The Council would use licensing information, complaints, risk indicators and local intelligence to decide how to prioritise inspections and compliance checks. The aim would be to identify and address poor conditions more proactively.

What standards would my landlord have to meet?

Landlords would need to comply with licence conditions. These are expected to cover safety certificates, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, electrical safety, repairs, property standards, overcrowding, waste arrangements, tenancy management, security, and action to deal with nuisance or anti-social behaviour linked to the property.

Could Selective Licensing help with damp, mould or cold homes?

Yes, that is one of the intended benefits. The proposed scheme is focused on improving property conditions, including issues such as damp and mould, excess cold, poor heating, disrepair and other hazards. Tenants should still report repair problems to their landlord and seek advice if problems are not addressed.

Could it help if I am worried about reporting problems to my landlord?

The scheme is intended to reduce reliance on tenants having to complain before action can be taken. Licensing would give the Council better information about landlords and privately rented properties in the proposed areas, allowing a more proactive approach. Tenants who are worried about reporting problems should seek advice from the Council or an advice organisation.

If you are living with serious disrepair, damp, mould, unsafe electrics, no heating, fire safety concerns or other urgent hazards, do not wait for the outcome of the consultation. Report the issue to your landlord and contact the Council or an advice service if it is not resolved.

3. Rent, eviction and tenant rights

Could my landlord pass the licence fee on to me?

The licence fee would be payable by the landlord or licence applicant. The Council cannot prevent all market rent changes, but one of the issues it will consider through consultation and monitoring is whether the scheme could affect rent levels or affordability. Tenants should seek advice if they are concerned about a proposed rent increase.

Could my landlord evict me because of the scheme?

Landlords must follow the law if they want to end a tenancy. They cannot simply evict a tenant without using the proper legal process. If you are threatened with eviction, harassment or pressure to leave, seek advice as soon as possible from the Council, Citizens Advice, Shelter or another housing advice service.

Will Selective Licensing change my tenancy agreement?

Selective Licensing would not automatically change your tenancy agreement. It would place additional licensing duties on landlords in the designated areas. Your existing rights and responsibilities as a tenant would still apply.

Would the scheme protect my tenancy deposit?

Landlords already have legal duties to protect most tenancy deposits in an approved tenancy deposit protection scheme. The proposed licence conditions would reinforce the need for landlords to comply with tenancy management requirements, including deposit protection.

What if my landlord does not apply for a licence?

If the scheme is introduced and a property needs a licence, failing to licence it could be an offence. The Council would be able to take enforcement action where landlords do not comply. Tenants may also have rights to apply for a rent repayment order in certain circumstances, subject to legal requirements.

4. Houses in Multiple Occupation and shared homes

I live in a shared house. Would the scheme apply?

It may apply, depending on the size and occupation of the property. Larger HMOs that already require mandatory HMO licensing would not need a Selective Licence. Smaller shared properties that do not require mandatory HMO licensing may be included if they are in the proposed designation areas and are not exempt.

Would shared homes have to meet extra standards?

Where a smaller HMO falls within the Selective Licensing scheme, the landlord would be expected to comply with relevant HMO management requirements and appropriate amenity standards. This is intended to help ensure shared homes are safe, properly managed and suitable for occupation.

5. How tenants can have their say

Why should tenants respond to the consultation?

Tenant views are important because tenants have direct experience of the private rented sector. The Council wants to understand whether tenants think the proposed scheme would help improve housing conditions, whether the proposed areas are right, and whether there are concerns or impacts that should be considered.

What can I comment on?

You can comment on any part of the proposal, including whether you support the scheme, whether the proposed areas are right, whether the evidence reflects your experience, whether the licence conditions are appropriate, and whether the scheme could have positive or negative impacts on tenants.

Will my response be confidential?

Consultation responses will be reviewed and summarised. The Council will not publish personal information in a way that identifies individual respondents without permission. If you are concerned about confidentiality, you should say this when responding.

How can I respond?

The consultation document explains how to respond. This may include an online survey, email, post, telephone support and consultation events. The Council is expected to provide accessible formats where needed.

What happens after the consultation?

After the consultation closes, responses will be analysed and summarised in a consultation report. The Council will consider the feedback before deciding whether to introduce the proposed Selective Licensing scheme, amend it or not proceed.

6. Where to get help

Who should I contact if my home is unsafe or in poor condition?

In the first instance, report repair issues to your landlord or managing agent and keep a record of what you have reported. If the problem is serious, urgent, or not being dealt with, contact Halton Borough Council or a housing advice service.

What should I do if I am worried about eviction, harassment or a rent increase?

Seek advice as early as possible. You may wish to contact Halton Borough Council, Citizens Advice, Shelter or another independent housing advice service. Do not leave your home without getting advice if you have been told to leave.

What if I need the consultation information in another format?

The Council will make consultation information available in alternative formats where required, such as large print, translated information or support to complete the survey. Contact details will be included in the consultation document and on the Council website.

Key points for tenants

- You do not need to apply for a licence as a tenant.
- The proposed licence fee would be payable by the landlord or licence applicant, not directly by tenants to the Council.
- The aim of the scheme is to improve property standards and management in the proposed areas.
- No final decision has been made; the Council is consulting before deciding whether to proceed.

- Tenants should respond to the consultation if they want their experience and views to be considered.

Consultation contact details

For details of how to respond, please see the Selective Licensing Consultation Document and Halton Borough Council consultation webpage.

- Consultation webpage: [Selective Licensing](#)
- Email: Housing.standards@halton.gov.uk
- Telephone support: 0800 612 9133
- Postal address: Halton Borough Council Environmental Health Department P O Box 317, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 9BZ
- Consultation closing date: Sunday 18th October 2026 11.59pm