

1

Background

The private rented housing sector in Salford currently represents 23.6% of Salford's housing stock. The amount of privately rented stock has significantly increased in recent years and although housing condition overall is improving, there remains a significant problem with hazardous and poor-quality housing.

Within Salford we are seeing increasing numbers of family dwellings being converted into Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to accommodate multiple tenants and a polarisation of the housing market, where the bottom end of the market suffers from very poor conditions.

The issue of landlords creating additional outbuildings/structures converted for accommodation, also known as 'Beds in Sheds', is an emerging issue within Salford, with such properties being found advertised on websites as 'self contained flats'.

These types of dwellings are ILLEGAL due to the absence of appropriate planning permission & Health and Safety Regulations.

2

Why it matters

If you routinely visit people's homes as part of your role, you should be using professional curiosity to consider the type of dwelling, particularly if there are outbuildings/structures being used as living accommodation, and hazards with the potential to damage the occupant's health and wellbeing. Such hazards may be very visible such as damp and mould, but others may also be less obvious, e.g. fire safety risk from timber shed structures, falls on and between levels, poor security, excess cold hazards, poor ventilation and overcrowding. Poor housing conditions can seriously impact on the health of occupants and the young and old are particularly vulnerable. You need to consider any potential child or adult safeguarding issues and be alert to other abuse that the family may be experiencing including exploitation.

It is not an offence to rent out a slum property, however failure to comply with an Improvement Notice issued by the Council is an offence. There are also other offences that can occur such as failure to obtain a property licence and offences relating to HMO management.

3

Information

The City Council has a statutory duty to remedy hazardous and/or illegal housing under the Housing Act 2004. Hazards can be assessed as Category 1 (where the City Council has a statutory duty to take action) and Category 2 (where the City Council has a discretionary duty to take action).

A recent case of 'Beds in Sheds', where children were living in converted accommodation was discovered in Salford. [Families living in garden sheds](#)

4

Information continued

It is important that during visits to people's homes, you are alert to the potential of poor/illegal housing and the impact on health and wellbeing of service users. Premises which have been converted into houses in multiple occupation may have layouts or additional structures which compromise fire safety or inadequate fire separation between individual rooms or commercial premises below.

Supply meters could have been tampered with or wiring can be exposed or unearthed. Gas appliances may not have been regularly checked or may have been checked by unqualified persons.

Tenants should have had an annual Gas Safe check completed and a Certificate should always be provided by the landlord.

7

Questions

What is the type of dwelling? What is the condition of the dwelling and are there are potential hazards? Is the dwelling sufficiently heated, ventilated, has appropriate fire escape? Have you considered the dwellings impact on the health and development of the tenants? Have you considered other safeguarding issues that the family may be experiencing? Do you know how to report an illegal dwelling?

**6**

What to do

The City Council operates a Private Sector Housing Enforcement Team which tackles the negative impact of Rogue Landlords. If something is observed which is out of the ordinary or raises a concern, then a referral should be made to the Private Sector Housing team at:

[Make a complaint about a rented property](#)

For concerns about privately rented property conditions, a Housing Standards Checklist document is available as a secure upload document.

5

Key Guidance

Guidance on Housing Health & Safety Rating System & Rogue Landlords can be found at:

[Housing health and safety rating system \(HHSRS\) guidance](#)