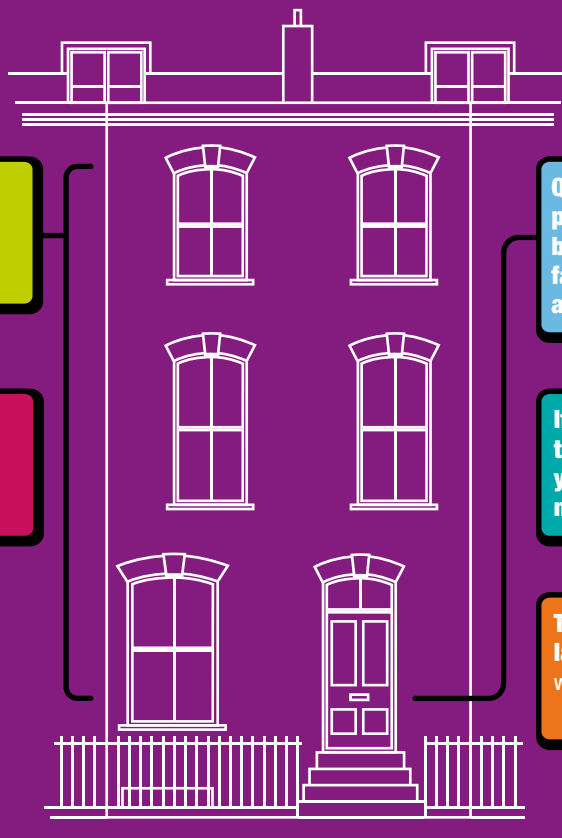Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister
Creating sustainable communities

TENANTS

Does your landlord need a licence?

Q1. Are you renting in a property of three or more storeys?

Q2. Are there other people living in the building and sharing facilities with you who aren't related to you?

Mandatory HMO licensing starts from April 6th 2006.

If you answered yes to both questions, your landlord may need a licence.

To check if your landlord is liable visit: www.propertylicence.gov.uk

Mandatory licensing for houses in multiple occupation

What's the aim?

Issuing licences to reputable landlords of houses in multiple occupation means that tenants, however vulnerable, should have access to decent, affordable housing.

Licensing also gives tenants assurance that their landlord will manage the building in an appropriate manner and is a fit and proper person.

Who does it affect?

Landlords letting the largest HMOs, those on three or more storeys with five or more people in two or more households living in them, must apply for a mandatory licence. Some councils may choose to license landlords with smaller HMOs as well.

For the purposes of licensing anyone who is living with members of their own family or living with a partner (whether or not they are married) will be treated as a household. If you are sharing with a group of friends each of you will be a single household.

When does it start?

If you live in an HMO liable for mandatory licensing, your landlord can apply from April 6, 2006. From July 6, 2006 all liable HMO landlords must have applied for a licence, or else they will be liable to fines of up to £20,000 or rent repayment orders.

How will this affect me?

A licence will be granted for a property to house a maximum number of occupants.

A public register of HMO licences available via the local authority means that you can find out which HMOs are licensed and who manages them.

This should help you find good quality accommodation.

Your landlord cannot evict you in order to avoid licensing. If you are threatened with eviction you should contact your local authority.

If a property is licenced to hold a certain number of occupants and there are more than that number living there at the time that the licence is granted your landlord should not evict you in order to comply with the licence. The landlord will be committing an offence only if he allows somebody else to move in after you move out when your tenancy comes to an end.

If you are not sure whether your home should be licensed you should check with your local authority.

Where can I get more information?

www.propertylicence.gov.uk
Your local authority may be able to help if you have problems with private rented accommodation. Ask to speak to the department that deals with private rented housing.

Citizens Advice
Listed in the phone book
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Community Legal Services Direct
0845 345 4345
www.clsdirect.org.uk

Law Centres Federation
020 7387 8570
www.lawcentres.org.uk

National Union of Students
0871 221 8221
www.nusonline.co.uk

Shelter
0808 800 4444
www.shelter.org

A Tenant's Guide to HMO Licensing Leaflet
Available from 0870 1226 236