

Response ID ANON-PEGT-J2VK-D

Submitted to Local authority returns form: damp and mould in private rented properties
Submitted on 2023-01-23 09:15:41

Introduction

Details:

1 Please provide the full name of your local authority:

Answer:
London Borough of Wandsworth

2 Please provide an email address of a named person we can contact with any further queries:

Answer:
roy.fielding@merton.gov.uk

3 Approximately how many private rented sector properties are in your area currently?

Answer. Please provide a number. If you cannot answer, please write 'NA':
48,400 - source GLA tenure data 2020

4 What data sources do you normally use to inform your knowledge of the quality and condition of the privately rented stock in your area?

a) Stock condition survey, c) Estimate based on contact with landlords/tenants, d) Estimate based on general knowledge of local housing stock, e) Housing census, f) Other: e.g. licensing schemes(s), council tax, please provide details (below)

Answer (option - f):
Housing Stock condition survey with data modelling to be undertaken in 2023 for discretionary licensing study

5 Approximately what number of full-time equivalent (FTE) do you have in your housing enforcement team? In answering, please provide the number of all staff working on private rented sector standards, enforcement and licensing, including how many FTE Environmental Health Officers are carrying out enforcement, plus those that work in administrative and managerial roles, but not including legal resource. Also please do not include staff who only work on MEES. Where a staff member works on MEES alongside other housing enforcement, please include them in your FTE numbers.

Optional:
7

6 Do you run any Selective and/or Additional Licensing schemes in your area?

Neither

7 If you do run any licensing schemes, approximately how many properties are covered by your scheme(s)? Please break down by each individual Selective/Additional licensing scheme

Optional:
N/A

Prevalence of damp and mould

8 Based on your assessment of damp and mould issues affecting private rented sector properties in your area, approximately what proportion do you currently estimate to have category 1 damp and mould hazards?

%.
Less than 1% - based upon sample size of around 750 service requests per annum and there being over 48,000 privately rented properties in Wandsworth

9 What data sources do you normally use to come to the assessment provided in question 8?

c) Estimate based on contact with landlords/tenants, d) Estimate based on general knowledge of local housing stock

Other please specify:
Housing Stock condition survey due to be completed in 2023

10 Based on your assessment of damp and mould issues affecting private rented sector properties in your area, approximately what proportion do you currently estimate to have category 2 damp and mould hazards?

%:

Less than 2% - as above in Q.8

11 What data sources do you normally use to come to the assessment provided in question 9?

d) Estimate based on general knowledge of local housing stock

Other please specify:

Housing Stock condition survey due to be completed in 2023

12 If you have not collected the information requested or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

Answer:

N/A

Enforcement Questions: complaints

13 Please tell us what steps you take when you receive a complaint about damp and mould from a private rented sector tenant. Where relevant, please refer to or provide links to any enforcement policies you have in place (e.g. on enforcing category 2 hazards) and any guidance you might provide for tenants experiencing damp and mould issues.

Optional:

Complaints are recorded on our M3 database system which are then reviewed by a lead officer and those that require investigation are allocated to an environmental health officer to arrange an inspection to carry out a HHSRS inspection.

14 Overall, how many complaints relating to housing standards have you received in the last three financial years that reference or relate to damp and mould issues in the private rented sector?

Answer - 2019/2020:

268 (estimated)

Answer - 2020/2021:

371 (estimated)

Answer - 2021/2022:

297 (estimated)

15 Of the complaints you received that reference damp and mould in the last three financial years, approximately how many resulted in inspections?

Answer - 2019/2020:

85 (estimated)

Answer - 2020/2021:

30 (estimated)

Answer - 2021/2022:

86 (estimated)

16 If you have not collected the information requested or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

answer:

N/A

Enforcement Questions: category 1 damp and mould hazards

17 Approximately how many inspections have you undertaken overall in the last three financial years?

Answer - 2019/2020:

170 - Officers carry out full HHSRS inspection when visiting properties following a complaint

Answer - 2020/2021:

66 - Officers carry out full HHSRS inspection when visiting properties following a complaint

Answer - 2021/2022:

171 - Officers carry out full HHSRS inspection when visiting properties following a complaint

18 Thinking now ONLY about all of the inspections that you undertook as a result of complaints, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:
7 (estimated)

Answer - 2020/2021:
10 (estimated)

Answer - 2021/2022:
14 (estimated)

19 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of licensing, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:
0

Answer - 2020/2021:
0

Answer - 2021/2022:
0

20 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:
N/A

Answer - 2020/2021:
N/A

Answer - 2021/2022:
N/A

21 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook for reasons other than complaints, licensing or stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:
N/A

Answer - 2020/2021:
N/A

Answer - 2021/2022:
N/A

22 If you have not collected the information requested above or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

answer:

Stock condition survey has not been carried out between 2019/23. An updated stock condition survey is expected to be carried out in 2023.

Enforcement Questions: category 2 damp and mould hazards

23 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of complaints, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:
20 (estimated)

Answer - 2020/2021:
15 (estimated)

Answer - 2021/2022:
25 (estimated)

24 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of licensing, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

N/A

Answer - 2020/2021:

N/A

Answer - 2021/2022:

N/A

25 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

N/A

Answer - 2020/2021:

N/A

Answer - 2021/2022:

N/A

26 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook for reasons other than complaints, licensing or stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

N/A

Answer - 2020/2021:

N/A

Answer - 2021/2022:

N/A

27 If you have not collected the information requested above or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

answer:

Stock condition survey data is unavailable as it has not been undertaken for a while, however due to be carried out in 2023. Inspections carried out for HMO licensing and complaints/service requests

Enforcement action

28 Please provide the figures for all formal and informal enforcement action taken on damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

27 - includes Preliminary (informal) Improvement Notices

Answer - 2020/2021:

30 - includes Preliminary (informal) Improvement Notices

Answer - 2021/2022:

40 - includes Preliminary (informal) Improvement Notices

29 Please provide the figures for improvement notices issued in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

2

Answer - 2020/2021:

2

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

30 Please provide the figures for civil penalty notices issued in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

31 Please provide the figures for prosecutions pursued in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

32 Please provide the figures for successful prosecutions in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

Wider context

33 Please rank in priority order (1 - the highest impact / 6 - the least impact) how the following have had an impact on enforcement action relating to damp and mould in your area

Optional - a) Capacity of your local authority. i.e. resource and funding hindering capacity to take enforcement action relating to damp and mould.:

2

Optional - b) Experience and expertise in the local authority. i.e. a lack of officers with experience, for example, experience pursuing prosecutions or expertise within the team including, for example, legal expertise.:

5

Optional - c) Strategic prioritisation of private rented sector enforcement. i.e. competing priorities leading to relatively lower prioritisation of enforcement action or proactively enforce.:

6

Optional - d) The regulatory/ legal framework for enforcement activity. i.e. too much complexity in legislation.:

4

Optional - e) Issues with gathering or providing evidence. i.e. tenants reluctant to provide statements or difficulties gathering the requisite evidence for issuing a fine or prosecuting.:

3

Optional - f) Limited data on the private rented stock. i.e. difficulties identifying private rented properties or insufficient resource to map out private rented stock.:

1

34 Please say why you have ranked the items on question 31 in this order

Optional:

Officers mainly deal with service request from tenants which is reactive, it is possible that there are tenants living in poor conditions that the local authority is unaware of. Members have approved a feasibility study into discretionary licensing to enhance the proactive approach taken by officers in relation to damp and mould, a report on the implementation is likely to involve all aspects listed above including capacity and enforcement actions taken

35 Does the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) allow for an effective assessment of how serious and dangerous damp and mould is in people's homes?

Yes

36 If not, what changes should be made to the HHSRS, to the system for categorising hazards or to enforcement powers under the Housing Act 2004?

Optional:

37 What other measures would help you to better prioritise addressing housing enforcement issues such as damp and mould?

Optional:

Upon receiving a service request officers carry out a full HHSRS inspection of the property, as often issues are discovered that have not been reported in the initial enquiry. The authority is structuring the service to allow for adequate prioritisation for damp and mould complaints, furthermore, the introduction of licensing schemes will provide greater funding for additional officers to enable the local authority to provide more support for tenants in the private rented sector.