

Robust Regulation in the Residential Sector

Communities and Neighbourhoods
Transitional Committee

14th December 2021

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Service Manager



What do we do?

The Council has a **statutory duty** to regulate the private rented sector

There are around 45,000 private rented properties in Sheffield, overtaking the council stock which is just under 39,000.

Fastest growing sector which has doubled in past 10 years and is expected to **double again the next 10 years**. During same period, this frontline team has halved.

Our objective output is to ensure people are safe in their homes and that properties are well managed

Requests For Service

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing

Tenancy Relations

Empty Properties

Snug

Support Private Rented Solutions

Selective Licensing

High Rise Fire Safety

Requests for Service

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021 - date
Number of RFS received	396	492	258	187
Number of people made safer by removal of Cat 1 / high Cat 2 hazard	1401	1818	447	585
Number of people with at least 1 long term health issue	35	22	8	9
Number of successful Prosecutions	14	5	5	2
Number of Civil Penalties Issued	6	31	22	1

HMO Licensing

Mandatory Licensing of properties occupied by 5 or more people, forming 2 or more households which share facilities

Around 2,500 licensable properties across the city

Licences must be renewed every 5 years.

Failure to renew is an offence which we will prosecute

All properties are inspected to ensure they meet licence conditions and management regulations

Tenancy Relations Harassment and Illegal Eviction

Loss of place you call home

No where to go

Fear / anxiety / stress / shock

Uncertainty

Very significant & imminent risk to health, safety & well-being of tenants

Vulnerable Tenants

Zero tolerance, take robust and strong action where offences are committed

Case Study

Tragic tenant made desperate help plea

'Vulnerable' man was barred from home by landlord days before he died

A TENANT allegedly barred from his home by his landlord several days before he was found dead in his room, a Sheffield judge has ruled. Michael White, 47, was found dead in his room at the Rivoli Valley, Sheffield, on August 1, 2011. The judge, Mr. Justice, ruled that the landlord, Sudhir Soogambur, was liable for the death. The judge found that Mr. White was a "very vulnerable" man who had been locked out of his home by the landlord on August 27, 2011. The judge also found that the landlord had failed to provide a safe and sound home for Mr. White. The judge ordered the landlord to pay compensation to the tenant's family.

Rogue landlord is spared from jail

Man, 47, died after being locked out of his home

THE sister of a man who died after being allegedly evicted today welcomed a Sheffield judge's decision to spare her rogue landlord from prison. Susan Roberts and her brother Michael White, 47, and landlord Sudhir Soogambur were friends for years before he was locked out of his flat in Northumberland Road, Brookhill, Sheffield, and left with nowhere to go. About the following week of August 27, 2011, he was found dead in his room at the Rivoli Valley. Sheffield Council successfully prosecuted Soogambur on the death man's behalf. Soogambur, now of Darkest Road, Crowthorne, one of the first people in the country to be convicted of illegal eviction in a prosecution by a local authority, was found guilty of the crime. The judge, Mr. Justice, ruled that the landlord, Sudhir Soogambur, was liable for the death. The judge found that Mr. White was a "very vulnerable" man who had been locked out of his home by the landlord on August 27, 2011. The judge also found that the landlord had failed to provide a safe and sound home for Mr. White. The judge ordered the landlord to pay compensation to the tenant's family.



Sudhir Soogambur: Rogue landlord spared prison

He was fined £1,000 and ordered to pay a further £1,000 legal costs over the cost of his defence. Speaking after the case, Mrs Roberts said: "I am very pleased that the council took the case on as it was equally as it did, and I am pleased with the result. "The death has been very upsetting for us all, but I

am glad it has not resulted in a criminal sentence for Mr Soogambur. I don't think I would have been happy with that. Michael lived at that flat for a long time, and had reported Mr Soogambur as his friend." Sheffield Crown Court heard Soogambur ordered Mr. White from his home of six years in May, 2011, because he needed to give his then, wife £116,000 as part of a divorce settlement. He then sent surveyors to change the locks on the door without Mr. White's permission, leaving him homeless. In desperation, Mr. White checked into a Salvation Army hostel but three days after he was found dead in shallow water in the Rivoli Valley. An inquest found he had drowned but was unable to determine the precise cause and recorded an open verdict. Dermot Hughes, prosecution solicitor, said: "Mr. White was a very vulnerable man who would put the key in the lock but the lock would not be turning." George Shaw, defending, said Soogambur had reasonable cause to believe Mr. White had vacated the premises. Council bosses in Sheffield brought the rare prosecution on behalf of the dead man after he complained to them he had been forced out. Dave Hickling, the council's Tenancy Relations Officer, said: "There are many vulnerable people living in private rented accommodation, and Michael White was one of them. Although we can't be sure from the council, he was with us that day the sudden and untimely loss of his home did cause him great distress. "We brought the prosecution because Michael was a vulnerable man who deserved justice."

Empty Properties

Focus on bringing back problematic long-term empties into use

We identify and liaise with owners to provide advice

Where the owner is not able to carry out required works we will move to enforcement

This includes Compulsory Purchase Orders

Snug

Snug is a property standard awarded when homes meet the required standard of property and tenancy management, and the landlord is considered 'fit and proper'.

Partnership scheme with SCC, both universities and Student Union

Best way for students to make sure that their home and landlord are approved.

Not an accreditation scheme as all properties are inspected

Currently 18,968 bed-spaces (466 properties) in Snug



Sheffield City Council



Private Rented Solutions

Scheme administered by Housing Solutions

Aim is to relieve the burden on council housing and to increase access to safe and affordable homes in a wider range of areas and types of property

Private Housing Standards inspects all properties in the scheme to ensure they are free from hazards



Selective Licensing

- London /Abbeydale and Chesterfield Road
- Selective Licensing runs for 5 years, this scheme came into force on the 1st November 2018 so will end on the 31 October 2023.
- Within these 5 years all properties will have been inspected to ensure they are compliant.
- 420 licensable properties within the designation area

No of Inspections Carried out	352
Number of properties where a serious hazard has been identified:	125
Number of properties where a serious hazard has been removed:	87 (170 serious hazards removed across these 87 properties)
Number of properties where fire risk is removed/reduced	53

Impact of Pandemic

Critical service so addressed emergencies throughout pandemic

Focus on meeting statutory duties

Some work areas were paused as not statutory / critical

Had to innovate to enable statutory work to be delivered differently

Backlogs have been created but working to address – could take up to 12 months

Some impact on backlogs in the Court system

One Year Plan

1) Communities and Neighbourhoods	2. Education, Health and Care
3. Climate Change, Economy and Development	4. Our Council

High quality, safe homes for all our citizens

Support and protect citizens in the private rented sector, investing in more inspectors for more robust regulation.

The city and service has a strong proven track record of robust regulation and zero tolerance on poor practices

Do have challenges around resources, particularly to senior inspecting officer roles

So, what are we doing about this?

Currently have high level apprenticeship in place with Leeds Beckett University

Working with other Universities and training providers to explore additional apprentice / training schemes

Review of the service is about to start to ensure that we have a robust structure to respond to growing sector and challenges

Conducting a programme of checks to ensure all high-rise and high-risk buildings in Sheffield are safe for their residents regardless of tenure

Focus on private sector as part of new regulatory arrangement being worked through with the Strategic Fire Safety Board

Private Housing Standards received additional funding to establish a dedicated team to carry out regulation and High Rise Residential Buildings

National shortage of qualified staff to undertake complex enforcement work.

Number of Local Authorities regularly carrying out recruitment

- This along with significant increase in demand across the sector is putting pressure on existing resources

Conducting a programme of checks to ensure all high-rise and high-risk buildings in Sheffield are safe for their residents regardless of tenure

Focus on private sector as part of new regulatory arrangement being worked through with the Strategic Fire Safety Board

- Close working with SYFR in relation to share enforcement role

Created single database of blocks in scope

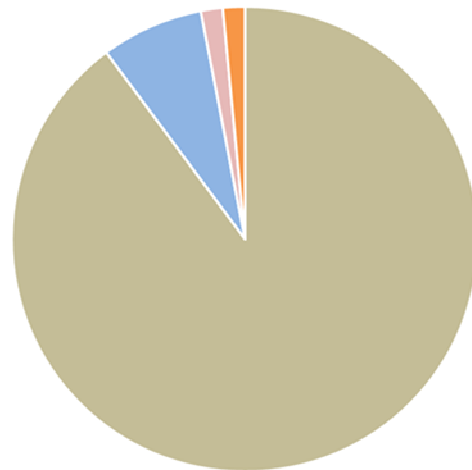
Working with DLUHC

Delivery of the Waking Watch Relief Fund

Launched leaseholder webpage to support private leaseholders
29th November [High-rise leaseholder support \(sheffield.gov.uk\)](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/high-rise-leaseholder-support)

Fire Safety Dashboard

Private Sector High-Rise: ACM Position



■ No ACM ■ ACM of Concern ■ ACM of No Concern ■ ACM Removed and Replaced

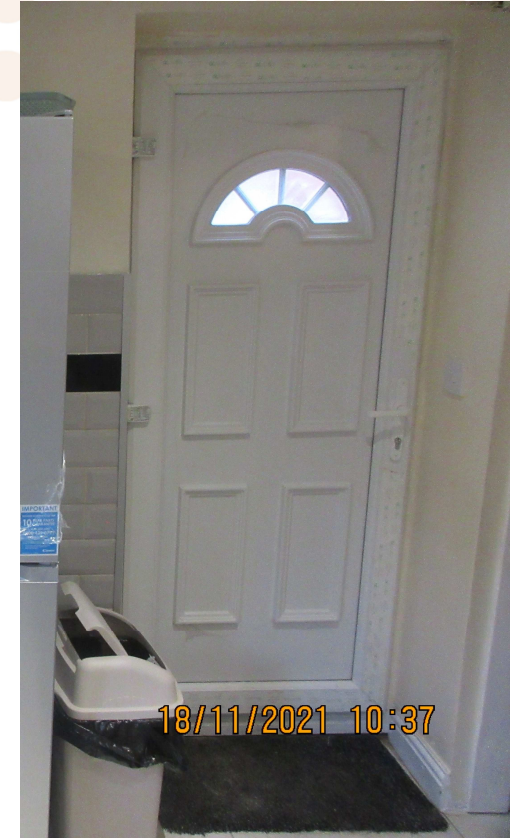
202	Total Private Sector High-Rise Blocks
15	Blocks with ACM of concern/suspected of concern
3	Blocks with ACM fully removed and replaced
1	Blocks with ACM of no concern
2	Blocks where testing has confirmed cladding is not ACM as previously thought
73	Blocks being investigated re EWS issues
13	Blocks being investigated re compartmentation issues
2	Formal Enforcement Action
37	Blocks classed as 'satisfactory' by SYFR



So, from this.....







To this.....





18/11/2021 10:



18/11/2021 1

Summary

- We protect the most vulnerable and ensure good quality accommodation
- Tackle rogue landlords robustly – the service has proven success and national recognition
- Zero tolerance approach to tackle poor property condition and management practices across the city



Any Questions?

