



**SOUTHERN LANDLORDS' ASSOCIATION**  
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This is a response to the request for written submission to the Combatting 'rogue landlords' inquiry from the Southern Landlords Association.

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**1. LAs have the powers and capacity required to enforce standards in the private rented sector and deal with 'rogue landlords'?**

LA's have substantial powers already, many under Part 1 of the 2004 Housing Act; bolstered by some subsequent Acts, especially the 2016 Housing and Planning Act allowing LA's to issue Fixed Penalty Notices and keeping the proceeds.

It would be a useful exercise to ask all LA's what Housing Orders have been issued in the last (say) 5 years; to ascertain what of their existing powers are being used.

Would also like to see letting a property in an unfit or hazardous condition made a criminal offence. At the moment landlords can let such property until they are caught. The emphasis should change to put more responsibility on landlords to get things right. Promotion of accreditation schemes and landlord training courses would help with this.

**2. What are the main obstacles to effective intervention in the private rented sector?**

Lack of budget and staff.

The increase use of Fixed Penalty Notices would help, whilst also targeting the criminal element in the PRS; rather than targeting all landlords.

**3. How effective are landlord licensing schemes in promoting higher quality accommodation?**

Most LA's misunderstand licensing, looking on it as a mechanism to raise money.

It is true to say that licensing has raised standards; but the problem is that there is no standard approach by LA's, leading to confusion.

Licensing was introduced to allow LA's to target poorly managed properties; the misuse (in our opinion) of Borough Wide schemes actually has the opposite affect by swamping local officers, allowing the criminal element to hide.

**4. What approaches have local authorities taken to promote affordable private rented accommodation in their areas?**

Whilst it would be desirable for more affordable housing to be built, it is a fact that many rent as the tenure of choice. We would prefer LA's to take a positive approach to the local PRS and to reward good landlords, as well as punishing those deliberately flouting the law.

Additionally there is a large section between those who know and criminals – this is the large sector of the PRS needing training. Mandatory accreditation would be the answer for this.

**5. How effective are complaint mechanisms for tenants in the private rented sector?**

Many tenants are not aware of their rights/complaints procedures; or are too frightened to use them.

The DGLG booklet '*How to Rent*' is a useful source of knowledge and should be more widely available; should certainly be in all LA offices and CAB.

There are ½ free tenant accreditation courses already available, DCLG should be encouraging these, perhaps by a Fast Track for Universal Credit, or the like.