

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

There are three key stages to the HMO Licencing application process:

1. Validation of application (minimum information submitted, correct fee, appropriate person proposed to be licence holder and the fit and proper person test)
2. Inspection of premises
3. Granting of licence (with conditions) including maximum permitted persons

Camden has taken the decision to inspect all its licensable HMOs prior to the granting of a licence. There are many benefits from inspecting first. We can identify issues that cannot be determined from the application alone, such as fire safety issues, the nature of occupation, whether there are adequate amenities and if there are proper management arrangements in place.

Whilst we accept it takes longer to issue a final licence, our HMO licences will be more meaningful because any required works (attached to a licence) will reflect the actual conditions in the HMO.

Inspecting first also means we can engage with landlords and because we visit, we have found that landlords are far more likely to understand what is expected of them and more willing/prepared to make improvements. This minimises the need to have to vary a licence that has been issued where inspections are not part of the application process. This helps keep the cost of administering the scheme and the resultant licencing fees down.

As a result of inspecting all premises, it can take up to 32 weeks from receiving a valid application to issuing the draft licence. This has been compounded by a recent surge in the number of applications received.

We recommend that all landlords read our Minimum Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation. This should help landlords and their agents understand what work conditions may be attached to the licence and determine the maximum number of occupants permitted to occupy the HMO (this number will depend on the nature of occupation, the room sizes and amenities available).

We do not expect landlords to carry out significant works prior to a licence being issued but properties must be safe and properly managed.