

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Cllr Holloway

To Cabinet Member: Cllr Smith, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Homes and Communities

Question:

To ask the Cabinet member how many enforcement cases have been raised against HMOs in Drake ward in breach of their licence in 2021-2022, 2020-2021, 2019-2020, 2018-2019, 2017-2018? To additionally ask the Cabinet member the number of enforcement cases against HMOs in Drake ward are currently live or ongoing?

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members)

Across Drake Ward and indeed the city, there is significant activity being undertaken by services to ensure the standard of housing provision is acceptable and that residents are managed appropriately. In the city there are believed to be in the region of 5,000 HMO's of which approximately 1,400 are considered licensable due to relevant factors such as occupation levels, of these approximately 519 are in Drake Ward.

A non-enforcement based approach is the starting point of activity where appropriate, and this seeks to encourage landlords, agents and residents to conduct themselves in the manner seen as acceptable. Where this approach is not viable or conducive to achieving the desired outcomes, enforcement activity is undertaken, this can be low level intervention or high level sanctions. Since the inception of the Civil Penalty Policy in November 2018, seeking to drive up the standards and management of accommodation, 49 fines equating to £181,515 have been issued against HMO landlords and agents in Drake Ward. This equates to approximately 9% of the licensable HMO's in the ward.

Since 2017, 369 category 1 hazards have been removed, 232 notices have been issued and 2,000 improvements to dwellings across Drake Ward have been recorded.

Of the 519 licensable HMO's in Drake Ward;

- 154 have been inspected and the inspection process for the current licence period complete.
- 31 have been inspected and works have been requested and will be followed up. Should a landlord fail to comply this will result in formal action being taken where appropriate and proportionate.
- 334 are due to be inspected during their current licence period. (5 year license period)

Community Safety activity is also aligned to some of the HMO properties across the ward and work in partnership with landlords and agents is ongoing. This work is directed by local intelligence and data from members of the Community Safety Partnership, 'Safer Plymouth'.

Work within this arena has driven new operating models with increased provider interaction, oversight and sanctions for residents. This work seeks to reduce the impact of poorly managed accommodation offerings on local residents by holding the accountable person such as landlord or resident to account for their action or inaction.

Enforcement based tools such as the Community Protection Notice Warning have and will continue to be used as whilst positive engagement is key to making sustainable change, failed outcome delivery needs to held accountable to permit positive change for effected local residents.

This approach has seen a reduction in the complaints received in the area concerning Community Safety matters.

Signed:



Dated: 31 August 2022