

Policy Briefing – August 2025



Making Private Renting Safer, Fairer and More Affordable in Newham.

Using licensing data and proven enforcement tools to protect tenants and target rogue landlords

I. Introduction

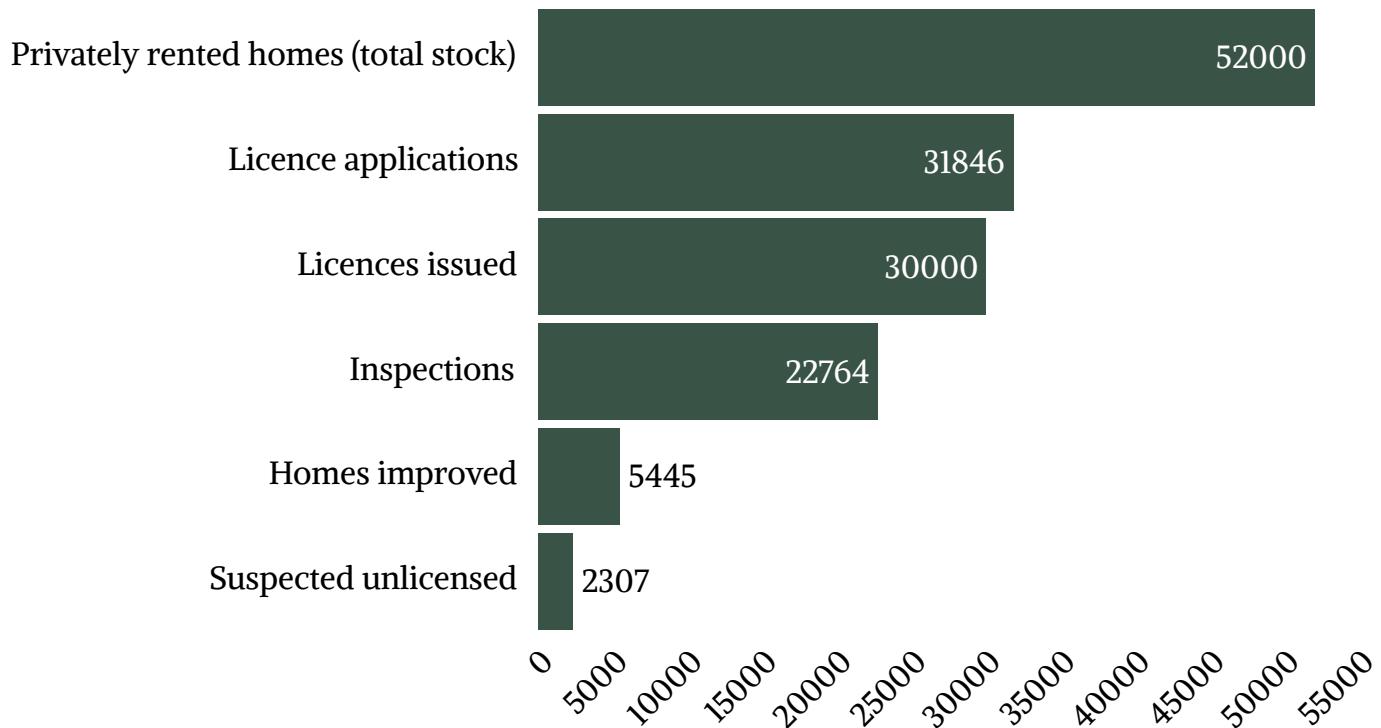


Figure 1. Scale of Newham's private-rented sector and licensing activity, January 2023 – March 2025.

Almost half of all homes in Newham, around **52,000** properties, are now privately rented, with **46 %** of residents falling into poverty once housing costs are counted. In the past **12 months** alone, the average private rent in Newham jumped by **8.3 %** (from £1,708 to £1,851 a month, June 2024 to June 2025). One of the sharpest annual increases in London. Borough-wide licensing (in force since 2013 and renewed 2023-28) has delivered real wins: **39,321** licences granted, **1,225** prosecutions and **28** rogue-landlord bans. On top of that the current

scheme is inspecting around **1,000** homes every month. Still, **2,307** open “failure-to-licence” cases and hotspots of damp, mould and illegal eviction show that the job is not finished.

Five actions we are proposing, low cost and fully within existing powers, will close this gap:

Five Low-Cost Actions (all within existing powers)

PRS Dashboard – live Jan 2026

90-day Rapid-Response for unlicensed homes

Data-triggered sweeps where escalation $\geq 12\%$

28-day Damp & Mould standard

Letting-agent register + quarterly spot-checks

These measures fit Newham’s Enforcement Policy principles—openness, proportionality, risk-based action—and can be delivered before April 2026.

II. Why this matters

Housing poverty is the norm, not the exception. Nearly half of all Newham residents (**46%**) live in poverty after paying rent—well above the London average (26%).

The private rented sector has exploded. In just over a decade, private rentals rose from 1 in 5 homes (2006) to nearly **1 in 2 (2023)**, straining enforcement and oversight.

Poor housing harms health. One in four households is overcrowded, while damp and cold drive illness and winter deaths.

Licensing works but gaps remain. Newham’s scheme has delivered 22,764 inspections and improved 5,445 homes in two years. Yet more than **2,300** suspected unlicensed properties remain under investigation, with tenants at risk.

III. Recommended Actions

1. Ward-Level PRS Dashboard

Launching a public-facing dashboard by January 2026 that reports licensing and enforcement data by ward.

This should include:

- Applications received
- Licences issued
- Inspections completed
- Enforcement notices and financial penalties issued
- Prosecutions undertaken
- Properties improved following intervention

The dashboard should be hosted on newham.gov.uk and made available as an open-data feed to support transparency and external analysis.

2. 90-Day Rapid-Response Protocol for Unlicensed Properties

Implementing a three-stage escalation pathway for suspected failure-to-license cases:

- Day 0: Written warning issued
- Day 30: Civil penalty applied (up to £30,000)
- Day 90: Prosecution initiated if unresolved

This protocol should be piloted in October 2025, with a target of resolving at least **75%** of cases within 90 days.

3. Data-Triggered Inspection Sweeps

Prioritise inspection sweeps in any ward where **12%** or more of compliance visits result in enforcement action for two consecutive months. Targeted inspection sweeps should be initiated for a three-month period in these areas. The 12% threshold is drawn from the borough's own enforcement data, which showed that 12% of compliance inspections resulted in formal enforcement action in the second half of 2024. Initial candidates include Canning Town South and Forest Gate North, based on that data.

4. Healthy Homes: Damp and Mould Standard

Establish a borough-wide standard requiring that all Category 1 and Category 2 damp and mould hazards be rectified within **28** days, using a “fabric-first” approach focused on structural, heating, and ventilation improvements. The standard should be launched by December 2025, with quarterly reporting on:

- Median time to resolution
- Percentage of cases resolved within target timeframe

5. Letting-Agent Compliance Register

Introduce a publicly accessible register of letting agents who comply with legal requirements for:

- Client Money Protection
- Membership in a redress scheme
- Transparent fee disclosure

The register should be operational by April 2026, with **100** spot checks per quarter conducted by Trading Standards. Enforcement outcomes should be published quarterly to inform tenants and support compliance.

IV. Implementation & costs

<i>Action</i>	<i>Extra Cost</i>	<i>Funding / Resource</i>	<i>Lead Team</i>
Dashboard	One-off ≥ £10k	ICT + Open-Data Grant	PSH Data Team
Rapid-Response	Process redesign; fines cover legal time	Civil-penalty income	Enforcement
Sweeps	Re-prioritise officer routes	Existing staff	Field Ops
Damp & Mould tracking	Minor form tweak + report	Existing staff	Enforcement
Agent Register	Uses Trading-Standards database; fines fund blitz	Penalty Income	Trading Standards

V. Monitoring (publish quarterly)

KPI	Target Q4 2026
Unlicensed cases closed in 90 days	$\geq 75\%$
Routine-visit escalation rate	$\leq 10\% \text{ in every ward}$
Median days to fix damp/mould	$< 28 \text{ days}$
Agents fully compliant	$\geq 95\%$

VI. Conclusion

Newham's licensing scheme is making real progress but persistent gaps in compliance, enforcement speed, and tenant protection remain. The proposals in this briefing offer practical, targeted improvements that build on existing systems and powers. By enhancing transparency, accelerating enforcement, and focusing resources where risks are highest, these measures would strengthen the borough's ability to deliver safe, healthy homes for all residents.

VII. References

London Borough of Newham. [*Private Rented Property Licensing Scheme*](#) [Accessed 2025].

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