



Targeted Enforcement- Operation Galaxy

In November 2017, the Council's Cabinet made a decision not to proceed with selective licensing following extensive public consultation. Instead, the decision was made to proceed with a targeted enforcement service which would extend the principles of the Operation Galaxy project.

By introducing targeted enforcement, the council was clear that it intended to;

- ensure that the issues identified in the evidence base for the Selective Licensing consultation were addressed and acted upon
- ensure that the existing powers and resources available to the Council are utilised in full and that the success of this approach would be reviewed before further consideration is given to any Selective Licensing scheme
- build on the best practice and partnership working already established to address problematic properties/landlords/tenants in the Boscombe, Eastcliff and Springbourne area

What is Operation Galaxy?

The implementation of a targeted enforcement approach now allows the council and its partners to;

- Adopt an intelligence led approach to enforcement which targets the bad landlords, not the good ones but seeks to generally improve standards in areas of need
- Extend consistent information sharing and partnership working with key agencies allowing for case prioritisation and effective, collaborative enforcement
- Embed a partnership approach which will avoid duplication of work and in turn promote efficiency and savings
- Builds better relationships with responsible landlords and letting agents
- Allows enforcement across the town rather than a specific area therefore takes into account any displacement of a geographically defined area

What are the Aims and Objectives?

Aims

1. To protect private rented tenants and vulnerable groups from the social and health effects of poorly managed and maintained properties within the PRS and in doing so, reduce inequality of housing
2. To create sustainable private rented sector tenancies attractive to good tenants

3. To make the area safer and a desirable place to live and work by reducing the detrimental effects of poor tenancy management
4. To encourage good landlords to operate within the area and make it easier to involve all landlords in wider strategies including crime reduction initiatives, local spatial strategies and other initiatives.

Objectives

To reduce anti-social behaviour within the private rented sector

- Support landlords to tackle antisocial behaviour effectively
- Require landlords to take reasonable steps to deal with anti-social behaviour and to work with the Council and its partners to tackle this where required
- Compel landlords to provide written tenancy agreements as well as undertake tenant referencing
- Give advice to landlords on what they might want to ask for as part of a reference
- Encourage landlords not to let properties to tenants who have been found to have committed persistent anti-social behaviour
- Encourage landlords to act in a professional manner and take advantage of a professional landlord body or accreditation scheme
- Promote good and fair management of tenancy relations

To contribute to crime reduction and address criminal behaviour

- Improve intelligence relating to the occupation of private rented sector accommodation
- Enable multi-agency collaboration on enforcement issues

To improve standards of condition and management in the private rented sector

- Undertake proactive inspections and make compliance checks
- Enforce minimum standards through licence conditions where possible
- Take enforcement action where necessary

To tackle rogue landlord behaviour

- Carry out validation checks against data that is already held by the Council
- Set up a facility for licensed landlords and tenants to report irresponsible landlord/agent activity and also to access advice about dealing with anti-social activity in the private rented sector
- Carry out a publicity campaign about appropriate standards in the private rented sector and how residents of the borough can report any concerns
- Use our improved knowledge of the private rented sector to tackle rogue landlords
- Increase enforcement action on identified rogue landlords to include prosecutions, civil penalties and assistance with rent recovery

To improve support for local landlords

- Register e-mail addresses of all landlords and tenants to update them on any major developments affecting the private rented sector
- Put in place a dedicated page on the Council's website for landlords and tenants of private rented properties with information and updates relating to anti-social behaviour and other tenancy related matters
- Produce a quarterly electronic newsletter for all landlords and tenants
- Develop a model clause relating to anti-social behaviour which landlords can use in all new tenancy agreements
- Carry out training sessions for landlords on tenancy issues
- Give advice to landlords and tenants on the services that are available across the borough for vulnerable residents including help for victims of domestic violence, help with substance abuse and where to report concerns on safeguarding issues
- Give advice through the landlord forum and on the website regarding services that are available for vulnerable people and how they can be accessed

The Operation Galaxy Team

Since the decision to proceed with Operation Galaxy, the new targeted enforcement team has been recruited, trained and are operational.

- Targeted Enforcement Manager
- 3 x Targeted Enforcement Officers
- Targeted Enforcement Analyst
- Targeted Support Worker

The scope of the team includes;

- Pro active inspection regime at scale
- Community Enforcement
- Anti Social Behaviour
- Private Sector Housing Enforcement
- Generic intensive support and referrals
- Identification and support of vulnerable persons
- Hot spot and strategic analysis
- Evidence led tasking
- Partnership working
- Landlord engagement
- Community engagement
- Referrals to relevant agencies

The team are co-located with the Bournemouth East Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) at the Cotton Exchange, Boscombe.

Contact Information

The team are contactable via phone and email. All members of the public will be provided these contact details on engagement and left calling cards when not present.

Phone: 01202 454923

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