Shared Regulatory Services
Gwasanaethau Rheoliadol a Rennir

Public Consultation

Proposal to Continue HMO Licensing in Plasnewydd

Easy Read Summary

About this consultation

Cardiff Council is asking for your views on a proposal to continue additional licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Plasnewydd for another five years.

The current scheme ended in December 2025. The Council must decide whether a new scheme should be introduced from 2026 to 2031.

This summary explains:

- What an HMO is
- What the licensing scheme does
- What has been achieved so far
- Why the Council believes the scheme is still needed
- How people can share their views

What is an HMO?

HMO stands for House in Multiple Occupation.

An HMO is usually a property where people from different households live together and share facilities such as a kitchen, bathroom or toilet.

Examples include:

- Shared houses
- Bedsits
- Some converted flats
- Student houses

HMOs provide an important source of housing in Cardiff.

What is HMO licensing?

Licensing is a way for the Council to make sure these homes are safe and well managed.

A licence places legal duties on landlords and property managers.

To get a licence, landlords must show that:

- The property is suitable for people to live in
- Safety standards are met
- The property is managed properly
- The person managing the property is suitable to do so

The Council will inspect properties and require improvements where needed.

What is additional licensing?

Across Cardiff, some larger HMOs must already be licensed by law.

Additional licensing allows the Council to include smaller HMOs as well.

In Plasnewydd, this means rented properties occupied by three or more people from two or more households.

Without additional licensing, many smaller HMOs would not be inspected unless someone made a complaint.

Why was the scheme introduced?

The scheme was first introduced in Plasnewydd in 2014.

At the time, the Council found that many HMOs needed improvements.

There were concerns about:

- Fire safety
- Property conditions
- Management standards
- Waste and rubbish
- Anti-social behaviour
- Security of homes

The Council believed that additional licensing would help improve living conditions for tenants and improve the local area.

What has the scheme achieved?

The Council believes the scheme has made a positive difference.

Between 2021 and 2025:

- 878 additional HMO licences were issued
- Every property with a valid application was inspected
- 84% of inspected properties needed improvement works
- Nearly 73% of licensed properties now meet the required standards
- Serious housing hazards were reduced
- Fire safety improved significantly
- Property security improved
- Landlord accountability increased

These results suggest that many problems would not have been found without inspections.

Improvements to housing conditions

The scheme has helped improve the quality of rented homes.

Many properties needed repairs or upgrades when they were inspected.

Common improvements included:

- Better fire safety measures
- Improved heating
- Better insulation

- Repairs to kitchens and bathrooms
- Improved security measures
- General maintenance work

The Council says that standards are higher now than when the scheme first began.

Improved fire safety

Fire safety is one of the most important parts of the licensing scheme.

Landlords have been required to install or improve:

- Fire alarms
- Fire doors
- Escape routes
- Emergency lighting where needed

The number of properties needing fire safety improvements has fallen by more than 75% since the first scheme.

This shows that many homes are now safer for people living in them.

Better health and safety

The Council checks properties using a system that identifies possible dangers to health and safety.

Examples include:

- Excess cold
- Dangerous stairs

- Electrical hazards
- Fire risks
- Damp and mould

The number of the most serious hazards found in HMOs has reduced since the scheme was introduced.

Many hazards have been removed after landlords completed improvement works.

Better property management

The licensing scheme has also improved how HMOs are managed.

Landlords are expected to understand their legal responsibilities.

Checks are carried out to make sure landlords are properly registered and licensed where required.

Licence conditions help landlords understand what standards they must meet.

This helps provide a more consistent experience for tenants.

Improvements to local neighbourhoods

The scheme is not only about housing.

It also supports wider work to improve local neighbourhoods.

Licence conditions require suitable arrangements for rubbish and recycling.

The Council also works with other services to tackle:

- Waste problems
- Pest issues such as rats
- Environmental concerns
- Anti-social behaviour

The aim is to make the area cleaner and more pleasant for residents.

Why does the Council think the scheme is still needed?

Although there have been improvements, the Council believes important problems still remain.

Many HMOs would not be inspected

Around three out of every four HMOs in Plasnewydd fall outside the national licensing scheme.

Without additional licensing, these properties would usually only be inspected if someone complained.

The Council believes that regular inspections remain important.

Many properties still need improvements

Recent inspections found that 84% of properties required some type of improvement.

This suggests that problems are still common.

The Council believes that continuing inspections will help raise standards further.

Housing complaints remain high

Plasnewydd continues to generate a large number of housing complaints.

The ward accounted for 14% of all housing enforcement complaints received in Cardiff between 2021 and 2025.

This was one of the highest levels in the city.

Fire safety issues still exist

Nearly one quarter of inspected properties required fire safety improvements.

The Council believes this shows that ongoing inspections and enforcement are still needed.

Fire safety remains a key priority because poor standards can put lives at risk.

Cold homes remain a concern

Many properties were found to have problems with excess cold.

Cold homes can affect people's health and wellbeing.

The Council wants to continue working with landlords to improve heating, insulation and energy efficiency.

Waste and pest problems continue

The Council receives a high number of complaints about rubbish and pest problems in Plasnewydd.

These issues can affect residents, neighbours and local communities.

The licensing scheme helps address these problems through licence conditions and joint working with other Council services.

Some HMOs may still be unidentified

Council investigations suggest that some HMOs may not have been licensed.

By continuing the scheme, the Council hopes to identify properties that have not yet been inspected and make sure they meet legal standards.

What would happen if the scheme continues?

If the scheme is approved for another five years, the Council expects it will:

- Continue improving housing standards
- Improve fire safety
- Improve property security
- Help reduce serious housing hazards
- Improve energy efficiency
- Support better waste management
- Improve landlord management standards
- Help identify unlicensed HMOs
- Support safer homes for tenants
- Benefit the wider community

The Council believes continuing the scheme would build on the progress already made.

Have your say

The Council wants to hear from:

- Tenants
- Residents
- Landlords

- Letting agents
- Businesses
- Community groups
- Anyone with an interest in Plasnewydd

Your views will help the Council decide whether to introduce a new additional HMO licensing scheme.

Questionnaires are available on our website to help you tell us about your views and experiences.

Scan the QR code below that is right for you to take part.

Tenant Questionnaire	Landlord Questionnaire	Public Questionnaire
		

Consultation ends 31 December 2026

All feedback will be considered before a final decision is made in 2027.

Need help taking part?

Please contact SRSHMO@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk if you have difficulty accessing questionnaire.