

# Private Rented Sector Strategy 2020 – 2024: Draft for consultation

Analysis of the consultation responses

Consultation period: 21 September-25 October 2020



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# The headlines

## Overview

- c400 stakeholders were consulted by email. Hard copy feedback forms were left in libraries
- **91 responses** were received (88 through the online survey, three by email)
- The analysis of the findings was completed by the council's Research and Insight team
- **The largest group** of respondents were **private tenants (34%)**, then private landlords (24%)
- Two online workshops were held, which were attended by 12 people from outside the council
- All the proposals received between **62% - 86% support**

## Proposal 1: Improve conditions in the private rented sector and ensure lawful practices

- With 4C, Proposal 1C: 'Raise awareness of our services which tackle poor quality properties and unlawful practices and continue to address issues through negotiation and enforcement' was the most supported proposal overall (86% agreement)
- The least supported proposal overall was 1B: 'Keep the case for other types of discretionary licensing under review' (62% agreed)

## Proposal 2: Support and engage with tenants, landlords and lettings agents

- Most supported, was 2B: 'Provide better advice and signposting for private tenants on our website' (82% agreed)
- Least supported was 2C: 'Continue to run and develop the landlords/lettings agents' forum (66% agreed)

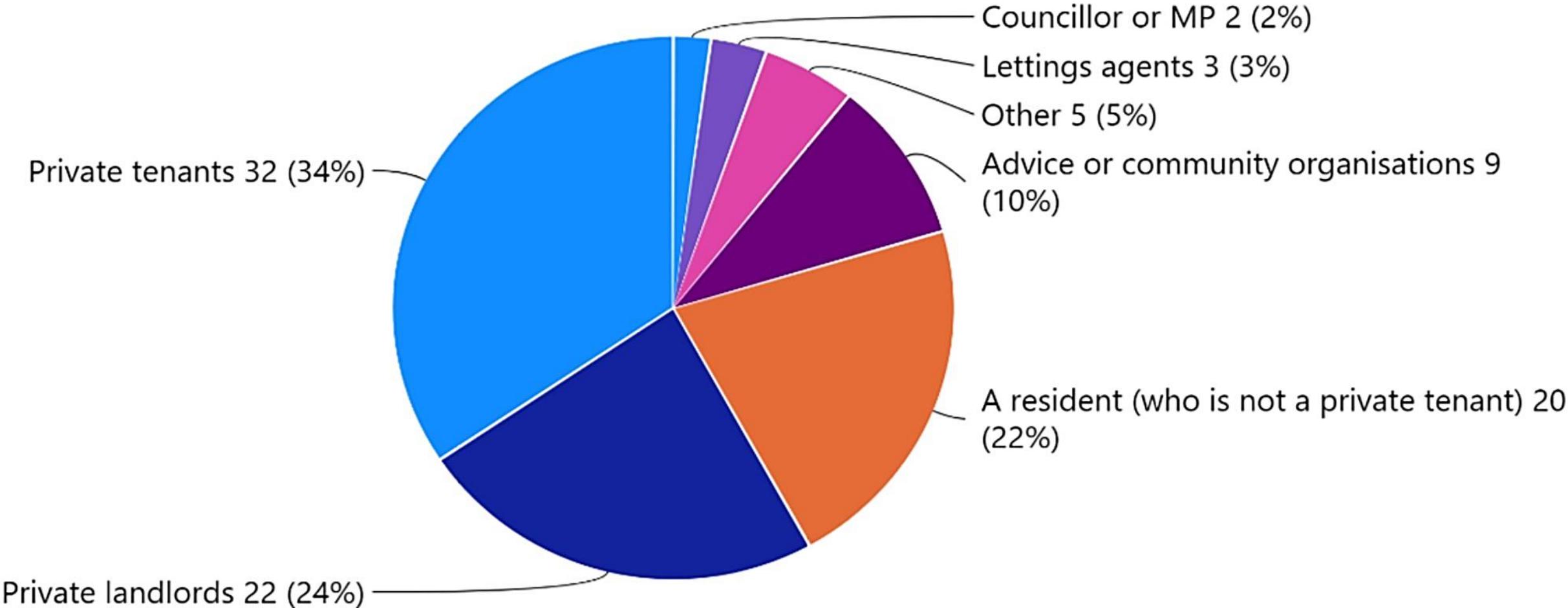
## Proposal 3: Improve knowledge and intelligence about the sector and work with other organisations that give advice and support to tenants

- Most supported was 3C: 'Improve the way we work with advice agencies supporting private tenants, such as by looking at which in which they can get follow up information when they have referred a case to us' (77% agreed)
- Least supported was 3A: 'Embed the approach taken by the Housing Standards Taskforce in our everyday service i.e. using intelligence and data to coordinate our work' (70% agreed)

## Proposal 4: Help to shape the sector (proposals for national changes)

- Most supported was 4C: 'Tenants' rights are explained as part of their tenancy agreement or license agreement in an accessible way, so they are easily available and understandable' (86% agreed). Along with Proposal 1C, this was the most supported proposal overall
- Least supported was 4B: 'Changes to the national Rogue Landlord Database' (64% agreed)

# The respondents



# Views on the proposals

Proposal 1: Improve conditions in the private rented sector and ensure lawful practices	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree
1A: Carry out a formal consultation on a proposal to introduce a discretionary licensing scheme across Westminster for all houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)	70%	13%	16%
1B: Keep the case for other types of discretionary licensing under review	62%	18%	20%
1C: Raise awareness of our services which tackle poor quality properties and unlawful practices and continue to address issues through negotiation and enforcement	86%	5%	7%
1D: Review our Enforcement Policy for the private rented sector	74%	9%	16%
1E: Do more to publicise successful legal action against landlords and agents	77%	8%	13%
1F: Work with the sector to increase the number of landlords and agents that are accredited with the London Landlords Accreditation Scheme	71%	12%	14%
Proposal 2: Support and engage with tenants, landlords and lettings agents	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree
2A: Continue to work with organisations like Safer Renting that provide specialist support to tenants	77%	9%	14%
2B: Provide better advice and signposting for private tenants on our website	82%	7%	11%
2C: Continue to run and develop the landlords/lettings agents' forum	66%	7%	28%
2D: Explore funding opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of private sector homes	79%	9%	12%

# Views on the proposals

Proposal 3: Improve knowledge and intelligence about the sector and work with other organisations that give advice and support to tenants	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree
3A: Embed the approach taken by the Housing Standards Taskforce into our everyday service i.e. using intelligence and data to coordinate our work	70%	9%	21%
3B: Establish a new private rented sector strategy group, bringing together organisations from across the city with an interest in the sector	71%	13%	16%
3C: Improve the way we work with advice agencies supporting private tenants, such as by looking at ways in which they can get follow up information when they have referred a case to us	77%	8%	16%
Proposal 4: Help to shape the sector	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree
4A: A national register of landlords and lettings agents	67%	10%	14%
4B: Changes to the national Rogue Landlord Database	64%		33%
4C: Tenants' rights are explained as part of their tenancy agreement or license in an accessible way, so they are easily available and understandable	86%		11%
4D: Changes to the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System so it is simpler, easier and quicker to implement and explain	83%	2%	14%

# Views of different respondents

## Private landlords

- Proposal 2D: 'Explore funding opportunities to improve energy efficiency of private sector homes' had the most support (77% agreed)
- Proposal 4A had the least support (30%): Make the case for 'A national register of landlords and lettings agents'

## Private tenants

- Proposal 4D had the most support: Make the case for 'Changes to the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System so it is simpler, easier and quicker to implement and explain' (100% agreed)
- Proposal 2C had the least support: 'Continue to run and develop the landlords/lettings agents' forum' (47% agreed)

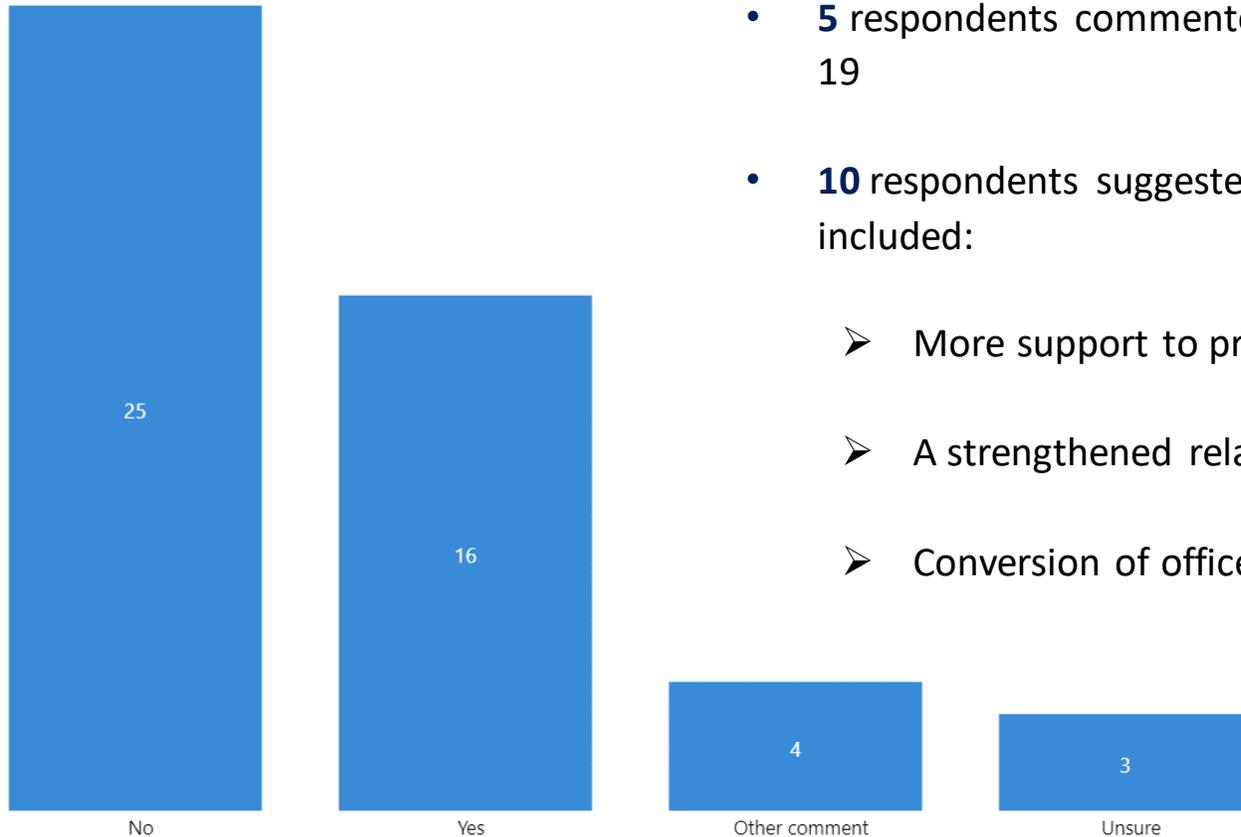
## Other Residents

- Proposal 1C had the most support: 'Raise awareness of our services which tackle poor quality properties and unlawful practices and continue to address issues through negotiation and enforcement' (100% agreed)
- Proposal 4A had the least support: 'Make the case for a national register of landlords and lettings agents' (70% agreed)

## Advice and community organisations

- Proposals 1A: 'Carry out a formal consultation on a proposal to introduce a discretionary licensing scheme across Westminster for all houses in multiple occupation', and 1D: 'Review our Enforcement Policy for the private rented sector' had the most support (100% agreed)
- Proposal 3B had the least support: 'Establish a new private rented sector strategy group, bringing organisations together from across the city with an interest in the sector' (56% agreed)

# Views on if any changes should be made to the strategy as a result of COVID-19



- **5** respondents commented that the strategy should be delayed or stopped due to COVID-19
- **10** respondents suggested changes, although there were no common themes, ideas included:
  - More support to private tenants
  - A strengthened relationship with the police as illegal evictions will increase
  - Conversion of offices to residential

# General comments on the strategy and is anything missing?

Respondents were asked if they had any general comments about the draft strategy and if anything was missing

## General comments

Areas where the same issue was mentioned three times or more, included

- There needing to be a balance between the needs of tenants and landlords in the strategy (mentioned eight times)
- Opposition to the proposal to consult on licensing houses in multiple occupation (mentioned four times)
- Support for the proposal to consult on licensing houses in multiple occupation (mentioned three times)

## Things missing

Areas where the same theme was raised three times or more, included:

- Short lets should be included (mentioned six times)
- Measures to increase housing supply (mentioned three times)
- Further proposals to change the sector: there were a number of ideas with no common themes (mentioned five times)