

Selective Licensing in Croydon

The Private Sector Housing team would like to thank the large number of landlords, agents, estate agents and tenants that took part in the consultation exercise. The consultation on the proposed schemes ran from Monday December 16th 2019 until Monday 9th March 2020.

Now that the scheme has closed, Opinion Research Services (ORS) are collating the responses to allow a full review to take place. The Council must consider all representations as part of deciding what course of action to take next. The Council and ORS are aiming for the consultation report to be available on the Council website by late April 2020.

Consultation contact details:

Main phonenumber – 0208 760 5476

Email: CPRPLconsultation@croydon.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/betterplacetorent>

Selective Licensing Administration Team

Phone: 020 8726 6103 (Monday to Friday) - 9am to 4pm or

Email: propertylicensing@croydon.gov.uk .

Croydon Landlords Forum

The Council is looking at holding the next forum in June or July 2020. This forum will provide an update on the current scheme, selective licensing consultation and the approach that has been taken with regard to the three schemes consulted on. We are very mindful of the current pandemic and so the date will be chosen so that we can maximise attendance. The meeting times will be 10am, 2pm and 6pm with time allowed for questions to presenters.

Warmer Homes

The Mayor of London has launched Warmer Homes, which offers residents up to £4,000 of grant for energy improvements to their home. The energy improvements which can be funded are:

- Wall and loft insulation
- First time central heating
- Boiler upgrades
- Solar PV panels in electrically heated properties

Home owners receiving means tested benefits, disability benefits, or on lower incomes can be eligible for the support, which includes expert retrofit coordinators who project manage the fitting of the measures. Some of the measures can also be fitted in private rented properties, if the tenant meets the eligibility criteria (and with the consent of the landlord).

The Mayor of London's team has commissioned Happy Energy to manage and fit the measures. Happy Energy has been working in the borough since last summer

through its HEAT London service, and will be able to also bring in additional funding from Energy Companies where required.

Full details are of the Warmer Homes service are the London website <https://www.london.gov.uk/city-hall-blog/warmer-homes-londoners> and <http://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthyhomes>

The Mayor of London's Warmer Homes service is scheduled to run until March 2021. However the funding is likely to run much out more quickly and it is worth encouraging residents to apply as quickly as possible. Funding will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Residents with pre-pay meters

According to latest government figures 23,670 Croydon households pay for their electricity using prepayment metres, needing to go to the shops to top up their meters. The government has just issues the guidance below about supporting residents using prepayment meters who cannot leave their homes due to the coronavirus/COVID-19. This guidance is for both gas [card] meters and electricity [key] meters <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-agrees-measures-with-energy-industry-to-support-vulnerable-people-through-covid-19>

The guidance asks residents to contact their energy suppliers, to discuss options for keeping them supplied. This could include nominating a third party for credit top ups, having a discretionary fund added to their credit, or being sent a pre-loaded top up card so that their supply is not interrupted.

OFGEM have added the information below to their website <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-and-your-energy-supply>

19 March 2020

Dear Croydon licence holder / landlord

Private landlords such as yourself are an important part of our local housing offer and our local economy. With this in mind I wanted to write to you as we continue to manage the effects of coronavirus.

On Tuesday 17 March, the Government announced a number of significant financial measures to support the local economy. Within this package the Government confirmed that mortgage lenders will offer a three-month mortgage holiday to anyone that finds themselves in financial difficulty due to coronavirus. We are acutely aware that the challenging economic position will likely lead to an increase in unemployment, so this mortgage holiday will be critical for anyone in this position.

However, only 60% of Croydon residents own their property – with the remaining 40% renting, either social rented or private rented. These residents are also likely to be impacted by the economic conditions.

The Government has since promised support for renters and propose emergency legislation to prohibit evictions in this difficult time. As a significant landlord ourselves, the Council fully understands the importance of rental income. However, offering support (which might include rental holidays or short term reductions) where residents face short term challenges will be critical for residents during this unprecedented time. I hope that you will consider such support if it becomes necessary and we will be lobbying Government to provide support to landlords as well.

With this in mind, the Government also announced a £500m hardship fund. We do not know the details of this fund yet, or the amount that will be allocated to Croydon, but will share details on our website as soon as these are known. It is anticipated that this will include support for residents facing economic difficulties and be in addition to the financial support and guidance Croydon Council already offers our most vulnerable residents.

The Council will continue to publish advice and guidance regarding coronavirus, including the financial support available to residents and businesses, on our website: www.croydon.gov.uk. Please share this with any tenants needing advice or guidance. There is also specific advice at <https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Butler', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Alison Butler
Deputy Leader