

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL INDEPENDENT HMO SURVEYOR ROUTE AND THE CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE OF HMO LICENSING CERTIFICATES OF COMPLIANCE

Independent HMO Surveyor application

Southampton City Council (“SCC”) will only accept an application for an HMO license under the independent surveyor route in the following circumstances:

- 1) A full and completed application is submitted together with the full fee
- 2) A fully completed certificate of compliance accompanies the application which is completed and signed by an independent HMO surveyor.
- 3) The valid and fully completed application form, full fee and valid certificate of compliance must be received by SCC within 3 months of the relevant HMO licensing scheme commencing and/or within 3 months of the applicant becoming the owner/manager of the HMO

Criteria for SCC to accept Certificates of Compliance from Independent HMO Surveyors

Independent HMO surveyor certificate of compliance will only be accepted by SCC if all of the following criteria apply:

- The independent HMO surveyor is a member of the professional institutions of RICS or CIEH and has included their membership number
- The independent HMO surveyor demonstrates they have public or professional liability insurance in place
- The independent HMO Surveyor must not be the same person as the HMO Licence applicant, or a member of their close family
The independent HMO surveyor certifies that there are no Category 1 hazards (HHSRS) present, and the property is in good repair, the property complies with current amenities and space standards, and the property complies with the LACORs fire safety guidance

If an independent HMO surveyor is contracted to carry out a survey of a property and any defects or compliance failures with the amenity or space standards are identified, the person responsible for the property will either:

- 1) need to rectify these issues and obtain a certificate that complies with the above criteria but the application, fee and certificate of compliance must still be received by SCC within the time limit as stated above, or alternatively
- 2) The applicant must make an HMO licence application through the Southampton City Council All Inclusive Rate.

The full SCC all inclusive rate fee will be payable and an officer from Southampton City Council will visit and inspect the property.

On receipt of an independent HMO surveyor application the Council may carry out any checks deemed necessary to confirm the information provided. The Council may also request additional information from the applicant.

Quality checking and Panel

The Council reserve the right to carry out verification visits to a sample of properties inspected by any independent HMO surveyor.

Should any deviation between the situation at the property and the information on the certificate of compliance be found in terms of SCC space and amenity standards, the LACORs fire safety guidance, or the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), then SCC will carry out appropriate investigations. If these investigations lead SCC to consider the independent HMO inspector is not appropriate to complete any further certificates of compliance SCC will notify the surveyor. If a future landlord then appointed this person as his/her independent HMO surveyor SCC reserve the right to refuse to accept the certificate of compliance and the applicant would then be required to pay the full fee and have an officer from Southampton City Council visit and inspect via the SCC all inclusive rate process.

All applicants need to satisfy themselves that the surveyor they have contracted with is suitable for this process and that the individual is not someone whom SCC has determined as being unsuitable to complete a certificate of compliance

Purpose of the Certificate of Compliance

- To provide evidence that the property is free from significant housing hazards (category 1), is in good repair and complies with current amenity and space standards.
- To verify the information provided on the licence application form in relation to the property.

Certificate specification

The certificate is designed to ensure that the Council is able to satisfy its duties under the Housing Act 2004 and is user friendly. The independent HMO surveyor will need to refer to the Council's guidance document to ensure that the form is completed correctly.

Certificate submission

The certificate of compliance must be submitted together with the licence application, but must not have been carried out more than three months in advance of the licence application being submitted, to ensure that its findings are current.

In order that the basic fee only is payable, the application must be made within 12 weeks of the landlord acquiring the property or becoming the manager of the HMO, it becoming licensable, or a previous licence expiring. If these criteria are not met, the penalty licence fee may be payable.