Dear xxxxxxxxxx,

I am writing to urge that you give your support to the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) [proposal to streamline licensing](https://www.nrla.org.uk/campaigns/wales/streamlining-licensing) in Wales.

Since 2015, private landlords are required to register – and be licensed if they practice property management – with Rent Smart Wales (RSW) if they wish to let legally to tenants. However, half of the Welsh local authorities place a second licensing obligation on those who rent out homes of multiple occupation (HMOs) in a certain area, which can be a ward or even the whole authority.

These discretionary licensing schemes will usually cost the landlords hundreds of pounds and involves duplication. For example, they will be required to go through a “fit and proper persons” test, despite having to jump such a hurdle with RSW. Additional licensing schemes last five years before they are dropped or renewed, at which point councils must go out to public consultation.

However, the NRLA argue that streamlining licensing in Wales is a win-win situation in which makes life and business for the landlord far easier at no cost to the tenant whatsoever. The higher standards for HMOs remain but in one simple system. The Association, which represents over 90,000 across England & Wales, argue that additional person obligations can be included in RSW requirements and additional property requirements can be incorporated into forthcoming Fitness for Human Habitation (FFHH) standards.

This will make these discretionary local licensing schemes obsolete and should, thus, be abolished, with extra safety requirements made a part of RSW and FFHH standards. As part of this, the NRLA are calling for assurances that safety and managements standards for HMOs will not be compromised as part of the process and the use of third-party data such as council tax records to identify non-compliant private rented sector (PRS) properties and landlords.

The benefits of doing this include:

* Easier compliance from landlords with less confusing requirements;
* More money for landlords to spend on property improvements instead of bureaucracy;
* More criminal landlords targeted and prosecuted as council resources shift from licence processing to enforcement; and
* Local discrepancies replaced with pan-Wales vision of a high standard PRS.

*Include own story and personal experiences*

Furthermore, following a report on RSW from the NRLA, [*Rent Smart Wales: The Accountability Gap*](https://www.nrla.org.uk/news-Rent-Smart-Wales-fails-accountability-tests), there must be greater accountability and transparency within the so-called single licensing authority for Wales. This should include:

* Producing a public annual evaluation and performance report;
* Direct scrutiny by the Senedd, at least through an annual committee evidence session;
* Much greater clarity between operational and policy decision making and functions, clearly defining where responsibility lies for each; and
* Establishing an independent body with oversight of RSW, accountable to Welsh Ministers.

I hope this letter finds you well and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Xxxxxxxxxxxx