

Trinity Zone 4 Audit

Undertaken 31st August 2023

Target Area

The Trinity Zone 4 audit area comprised of the areas surrounding the lower part of Nairne St, including the lower parts of Coal Clough Lane, Hudson St, Westmorland St, Athol St North, Elmwood St, Arran St, Bruce St, parts of Tay St, Howard St and Colin St. The map below depicts the area that was covered in the audit.



The remit of the audit was to conduct visual checks of all private rented properties within Zone 4 of the Trinity Selective licensing designation. This was to ensure that all properties were free from defects and in general good condition.

The purpose of the audits was to collect visual data including:

- State of the back streets (fly tipping etc).
- State of back yards of rented properties (correct waste disposal bins, cleanliness and secure gates/walls).
- Visible defects /external house defects on rented properties.
- Internal inspection where there was evidence of disrepair, dissatisfaction or a check of smoke/carbon monoxide alarms was necessary.
- Occupancy checks on vacant or non-licensed rented properties were identified from council tax records.

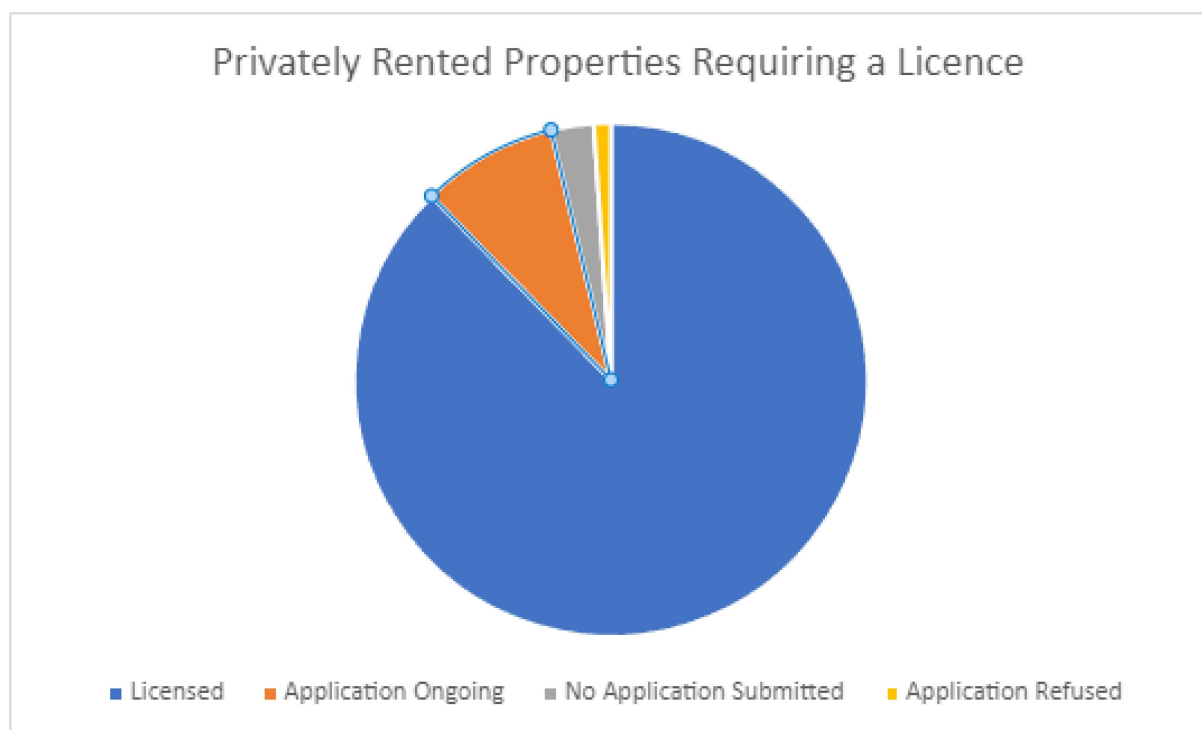
- Desktop checks were also made of Gas Safety Certificates (GSC), Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) and Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) of the licensed properties.

Composition

The area has a total of 289 properties. Of the 289 properties, a total of 187 properties were privately rented and therefore required a licence. Of this, 164 properties were licensed, 16 had an application ongoing, 2 applications had been refused and 5 properties had no application where one was required. The unlicensed properties will be pursued through sending application reminders and where owners are not willing to engage, these landlords will be prioritised for civil penalty or prosecution.

There had been 4 licensing exemptions granted. The remaining properties were all non-licensable including 63 owner occupied properties, 24 properties owned by Registered Social Landlords (not requiring a licence), 10 vacant properties and 1 business premises.

Due to several sales of properties within the area recently, these numbers continuously evolve and change, and we expect more properties that are currently exempt from licencing will require licences in the coming weeks and months. We monitor these numbers by doing regular checks.



Dirty Back Yards (DBY)

12 properties were identified as having a dirty back yard. This included general waste in bin bags, dog fouling, furniture and building waste. These were reported to the landlord and on some occasions passed on to Streetscene too.

Follow up:

On our follow up audit on 10th October 2023, we found that 3 of the properties had their yards cleared. The remaining properties will be investigated further and passed on to Streetscene, these have not just occurred at privately rented properties, but also owner occupied, RSL and vacant properties.

We have since been contacted by the landlords of 3 more properties to say that the yards have been or will be cleared imminently.

Wheelie Bins

In total, 4 properties were found to have no bins or the correct bin facilities. This was reported to the landlord for them to arrange for the correct bins to be provided. It is a condition of the landlord's Licence that they provide waste disposal equipment at the start of the tenancy. Where no evidence can be provided by the landlord that they have issued waste disposal equipment, the selective licence team can act against the landlord for a breach of the conditions of their licence and can result in a Civil Penalty.

Follow up:

On our follow up visit to the area on 10th October 2023, we confirmed that all 4 bins were now provided.

Fly-tipping

Overall, the streets and back streets appeared generally tidy with few incidents of fly-tipping. 8 reports were sent in to Streetscene via the Love Clean Streets app.





Disrepairs

Property Conditions are checked against the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). It is a risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and

hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in properties. Tackling the hazards will make housing healthier and safer to live in.

The HHSRS identifies 29 potential hazards within properties. To check against all the hazards, require a full internal and external inspection of the properties. As the remit of this audit was a visual external inspection of the properties, it rules out any suggestion that all hazards could be identified from it. However, the visual inspection information together with the GSC, EICR and EPC data is a good indicator to identify properties that potentially may have disrepairs.

Of the 187 privately rented properties, over half showed signs of external disrepair – a total of 94 properties. The main issues identified related to vegetation in gutters/leaking gutters, slipped roof slates, missing pointing and inadequate back gates.

Landlords of 9 properties have been asked solely to do some maintenance and visual improvement work. This is not something that we can enforce but is something that would benefit the visual appearance of the full street if work such as painting could be done. Selective Licensing is only one of many tools used to assist in the regeneration of the area. Whilst this is not something we can enforce through Licensing we can look at management arrangements in relation to regular inspections and dealing with disrepair.

Full HHSRS inspections have been requested at 2 properties.

Follow Up:

A follow up of the audit was completed on 10th October 2023. It was found that 34 out of the 94 properties had their repairs dealt with. None of the 9 properties where the issues identified were just aesthetic had been resolved.

An additional 5 landlords have contacted the team to confirm that repairs have been sorted after the follow up checks were completed.

We will look at those which have failed to engage and resolve repairs and see whether it is appropriate to take action through the GLAS (Good Landlord and Agent Scheme) accreditation scheme, licensing conditions or referring on to our Housing Standards team.

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)

All rented properties must have an EPC rating of at least an 'E.' Where properties have a lower rating, landlords are expected to improve the property in order to raise its EPC rating. All licensable properties within the audit area had an EPC of an 'E' or above.

Gas Safety Certificates (GSCs)

All rented properties require an annual Gas Safety Check (GSC). Landlords operating within the Selective Licence areas are required under the conditions of their licence to submit an annual Gas Safety certificate to the Selective Licence team. Failure to provide an annual GSC certificate is a breach of their licence condition and can result in their licence being revoked.

Of the 180 licensed or in the process of being licensed properties, 65 of them had failed to provide up to date gas safety certificates. These will be chased up with reminder e-mails. If they fail to

provide the certificates, civil penalty or prosecution action will be taken for a breach of licensing conditions.

Follow Up: A further push with telephone calls, follow up e-mails to managing agents and landlords has resulted in 15 gas certificates now outstanding. We will now be progressing legal action where necessary for a breach of conditions of those other properties if they continue to fail to provide or do not engage with the Selective Licensing team.

Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs)

Recent legislation brought in by the Government, Electrical Safety Standards Regulations 2020 requires all landlords to have a 5 yearly inspection of the electrical circuits in their rented properties. The legislation came into effect after the current Trinity Selective Licensing designation began. Although now all Selective Licence applicants are required to submit a 'satisfactory' EICR for their property, it was not a requirement at the beginning of the designation.

All properties within the audit area were sent tasks through their online application requesting them to send the EICR in. Of the 180 properties where a licensing application has been submitted, there were 53 outstanding EICRS. After this first step, we adopt a more formal approach to requesting the EICRs. This starts with a 7-day letter, then a 28-day remedial notice and if after that an EICR is still not provided, a Civil Penalty will be served.

Follow Up: After making telephone calls to landlords and additional e-mails to both landlords and managing agents, there are 9 EICRs that remain outstanding. The Council will be taking the necessary next steps which may ultimately result in a Civil Penalty.

Audit Summary

	31 st August 2023	24 th October 2023
Total Properties	289	289
Part 3	187	187
Licensed	164	167
Application Ongoing	16	13
Refused	2	2
No Application	5	5
Exemption Approved	4	4
RSL	24	25
Owner Occupied	63	63
Vacant	10	9
Business Premises	1	1
Gas Expired	65	15
EPC Rating below an E	0	0
EICR Expired/Not Provided	53	9
No Wheelie Bin	4	0
Disrepairs	94	55
DBY on Audit Day	12	9