

# Priority 2

## Improving Housing Quality

### 2.4 Student Housing

Leeds is a thriving University city with the student population forecast to plateau at approximately 58-59,000 in 2018. There has been a significant shift in student housing choice in recent years from the use of shared housing in the Hyde Park/Headingley areas to purpose built flatted accommodation surrounding the city centre/Universities. The purpose built accommodation has generally been completed to a high standard and the traditional student housing options are often not of a comparable standard. Research carried out by local third sector organisation [Re'new](#) has forecast that there could be surplus of over 5,700 student housing units in the city by mid-2016. In practical terms, this will mean under-occupancy of shared housing or an increase in empty properties. The Council is committed to working with the Universities, landlords and tenants to raise standards in the traditional student housing options. The Council is able to licence Houses in Multiple Occupations (HMOs) that are over three storeys in height or have five or more occupants. There are currently 2,500 HMO licences, with five year terms, in place combined with a rolling programme of property inspection. Issues such as 'tired' looking properties



and poorly maintained gardens are not covered under the legal licensing provisions and the Council will continue to work with landlords, students and the Universities to improve the current position.

The Council is being flexible to respond to the risk of under-occupancy/empty homes relating to traditional student housing stock. In 2012, the Council removed the option of converting a self-contained property to an HMO through the 'permitted development' planning regulation. On a case by case basis, this provision can be changed if a need for conversion is established.

The Council has a strong partnership with the Universities and supports the work of Unipol, student housing organisation, in its management of its own accreditation scheme that again seeks to raise standards of accommodation and management.

#### Actions and Targets

- Deliver a rolling programme, 500 per year of licensed HMO inspections
- Work with property owners to deliver improvements identified
- Liaise with the Universities and landlords in respect of changing use of student housing
- Housing Forum to monitor the agreed actions following the final report of the Student Accommodation Working Group
- Work with landlords in respect of improving housing conditions not covered by the statutory framework