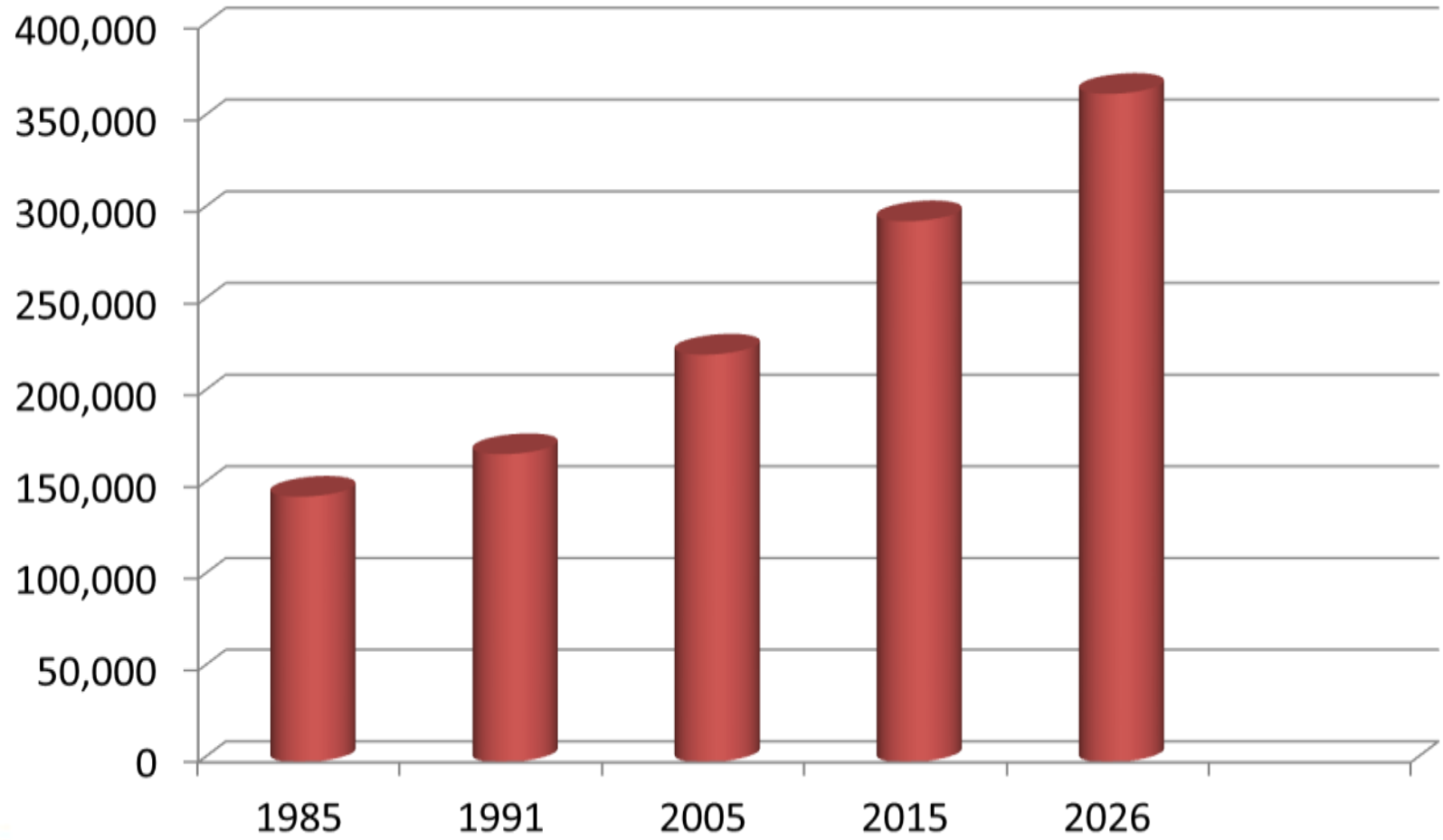


Tower Hamlets Private Renters' Charter

Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

24 April 2017

A fast-growing population



Private Renting in Tower Hamlets

36% of homes socially rented

40% of homes privately rented

6,000 'Right to Buys' privately rented

It's expensive!



Private Renters in Tower Hamlets

Diverse

30% are non-British white

34% are from BAME communities

14,500 new overseas residents in a year

Young

68% are under 35

10% are full-time students

Private Renters in Tower Hamlets

Mostly in well-paid work

57% are in professional or managerial work

But... More than 5,000 private renters receive housing benefit - more than half of claimants are in work

But... Up to 40% in poverty

Mostly in better health

But... 35% of households have a disabled resident

Nearly one in three vulnerable private renters live in a home that is not decent

Private Rented Housing Strategy 2016-21

Licensing

Resources for inspection & enforcement

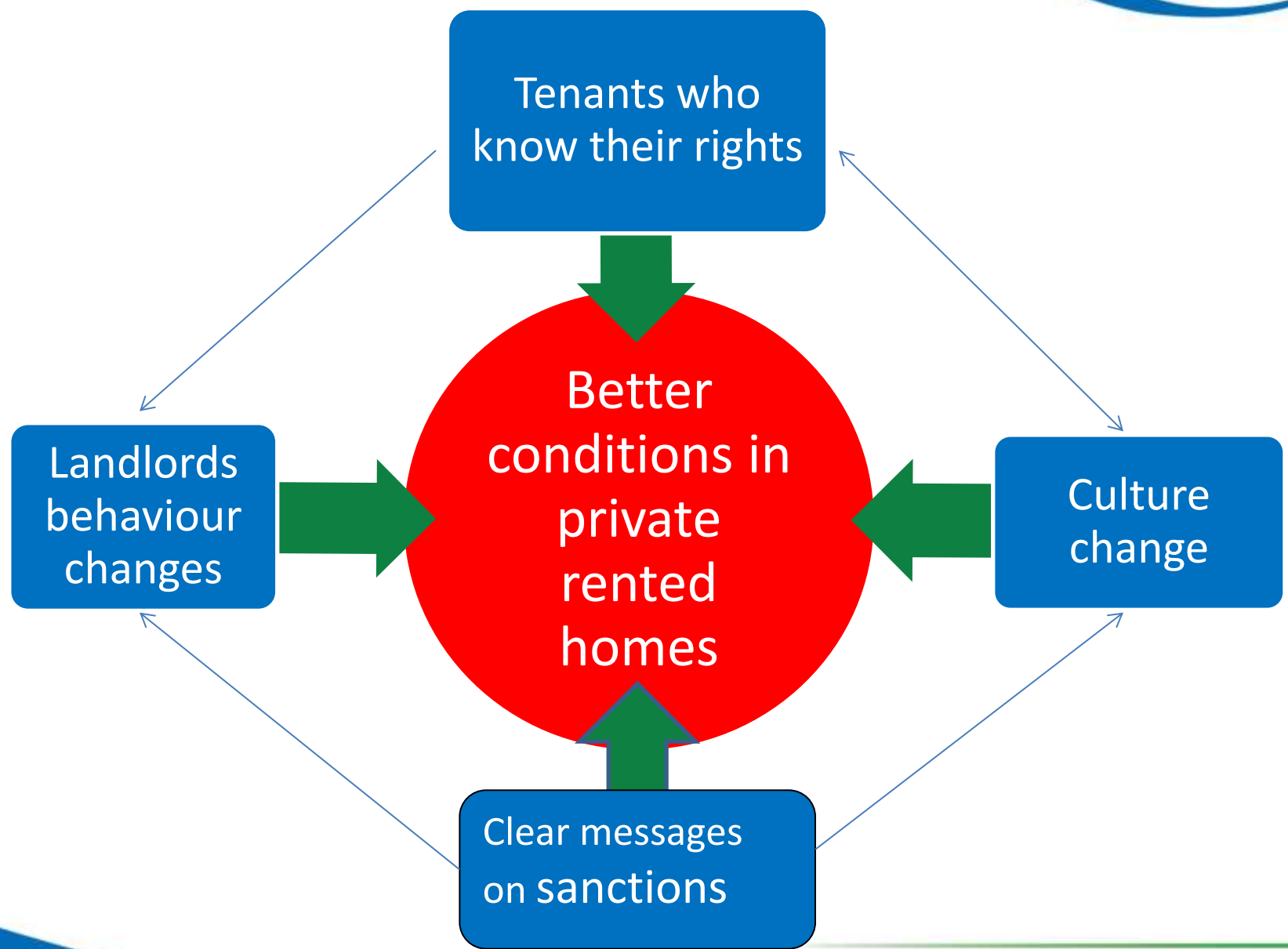
Rogue and criminal landlords

Joint work with registered providers

Private Renters' Charter

Why adopt a Private Renters' Charter?





Developing the Charter: Smarter Together

Cross-departmental working

On-line consultation

Working group - includes CAB, Toynbee Hall, Bromley By Bow Centre, Island Advice, TH Law Centre, Shelter, Generation Rent, QMU

Registered Providers working group

Landlords' Forum

Endorsements - includes ARLA, RLA, NLA

Structure of Tower Hamlets Charter

Charter

- Statement of Basic Standards
- General Commitment to Support

Web Page

- More detailed information
- Specific promise for each statement

Strategy

- Publicity campaign
- Working Group reviews



When you are looking for a home to rent, agents must treat you fairly

- Until agency fees for tenants are banned, all agents must display any fees they charge - you should be able to see their fees in their office and on their website without having to ask.
- Any complaint must be taken seriously – and all agents must clearly display which complaint redress scheme they belong to – (TPOS, OSP, PRS logos)
- All letting agents must publically display whether they belong to a client money protection scheme.
- Any discrimination against you because of your nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, disability or gender is against the law – though agents may ask for proof you have a right to live in the UK.

Your landlord must treat you fairly

- All good landlords give written tenancy agreements. If your landlord will not do this, they must put in writing your address, your rent, the length of the agreement – and their own name and contact address.
- Your landlord must prove that your deposit has been safely protected within 30 days (TDS, DPS, my deposit logos).
- You shouldn't be hit with surprise fees. Your tenancy terms must be understandable and fair.
- Your rent should not go up during the fixed period of your tenancy.
- Landlords in some parts of Tower Hamlets must have a license from the council.

Your rented home must be safe and secure

- There must be a working smoke alarm on every floor. There must also be a carbon monoxide alarm in any room with a fire or wood burning stove.
- If you have gas, your landlord must give you a gas safety certificate when you move in - and then make sure a Gas Safe engineer checks every 12 months.
- The electricity supply, wiring and electrical items supplied with your home must be safe. Any problems must be fixed in reasonable time.
- Your home must be weatherproof. Any leaks and drafts must be fixed in a reasonable time.
- Your landlord must deal with damp or mould.
- Your home must have hot and cold water.
- Your landlord must not disturb or harass you. Your landlord should only visit when it is convenient for you – and must give you at least 24 hours' notice.
- If your landlord wants you to move out, they must give you notice in writing and then stick to the law about ending a tenancy.



Web
Page

Agents must display their fees...

The Council has powers to fine letting agents up to £5,000 for failing to display their fees prominently on a poster in their office and on any website they may have. They must not mislead you. They must clearly describe the cost of each fee including VAT, and what each fee covers

Fees don't have to be published in this way for websites that only advertise properties, like Rightmove or Zoopla.

It's also a criminal offence if a letting agent charges you to register with them or to show you a list of properties to rent.

The Council can also fine agents up to £5,000 for not belonging to one of the following organisations:

- The Property Ombudsman (TPO)
- The Property Redress Scheme.
- Ombudsman Services Property

Letting agents fees for tenants will probably be banned in the next two years – the government is consulting now on whether this would be the right thing to do. Tower Hamlets Council has asked for the ban to go ahead, and we will keep you informed of any progress towards that.

For further information about your rights when dealing with letting agents please see:

- [Shelter](#) (hyperlinked)
- [Citizens Advice Bureaux](#) (hyperlinked)

WHO WILL HELP ME IF AN AGENT OR LANDLORD BREACHES THIS PART OF THE TOWER HAMLETS RENTERS' CHARTER?
(Hyperlinked)



The Charter as a process

- Resources
- Ongoing publicity campaign
- A live document
- Private Renting Forum for all signatories

Timescales

- 9 May - MAB
- 30 May - Cabinet
- 29 June – Launch
- November – First PRS Forum
- Review in April 2018