



**Levelling Up, Housing  
and Communities  
Committee**

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London, SW1P 4DF**

25 May 2023

Dear Michael,

I am writing to you following the introduction of the Renters (Reform) Bill on 17 May, to request further information about the Government's plans for reforming the private rented sector; and to highlight the Committee's previous work in this area.

The Committee published its report [Reforming the Private Rented Sector](#) on 9 February 2023. You had previously indicated the Government's response would be published alongside the publication of the Bill.<sup>1</sup> However, we have not yet received the Government's response to this report and such a response will be central to our on-going work in this area.

**Please could you confirm when we will receive the Government's response to our report?**

The Committee would like to better understand how important provisions for reform of the private rented sector will be introduced alongside those in the Bill. In particular, there are three additional proposals from the 2022 White Paper "A Fairer Private Rented Sector" which now do not appear to be included in the Bill but which the Government has indicated it still intends to bring in:

- making refusals to rent to tenants in receipt of benefits or with children illegal;
- applying the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector; and
- strengthening councils' enforcement powers.

We are not currently clear how or when the Government plans to introduce these three proposals. For example, your Written Ministerial Statement of 17 May described these three proposals as "Further measures we will legislate for in this Parliament" and it said that the legislation would be brought forward "at the earliest opportunity".<sup>2</sup> We are also

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<sup>1</sup> [Letter from the Secretary of State to the Chair dated 3 May 2023 following up his appearance before the Committee on 27 March](#)

<sup>2</sup> WMS HCWS778 [on Reforming the Private Rented Sector], 17 May 2023



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aware that, as part of its public communications, the Department has said that legislation to introduce these proposals will be brought forward “as part of the Bill”<sup>3</sup> and Part 4 of the Bill has been defined as a “placeholder clause” to allow for further Government amendments.<sup>4</sup> We recognise that the Government may also be able to, at least partly, deliver these proposals through enforcement of existing regulations.

**Please could you confirm if your intention is to introduce these three proposals through the Renters (Reform) Bill or via an alternative avenue? Please could you also provide us with a timeframe for doing this?**

We are grateful that the Government has taken up the Committee’s recommendation<sup>5</sup> to improve the court system as part of reforms to the private rented sector but would appreciate more clarity on reforms to the court system. Your Written Ministerial Statement outlines that court reform plans will include digitising the process and prioritising cases<sup>6</sup>, but does not mention whether they will include other measures in the Committee’s recommendation: introducing a specialist housing court, agreeing target times for possession claims, and providing guidance on antisocial behaviour as grounds for possession.

**Please could you confirm all the measures which will be included in the court improvements and how their implementation will be aligned with the abolition of section 21 and new possession grounds?**

I would be grateful for a reply by 2 June, or, if earlier, before the Bill’s Second Reading.

Best wishes,

**Clive Betts MP**  
**Chair, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee**

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<sup>3</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, “[Government introduces landmark reforms to deliver fairer private rented sector for tenants and landlords](#)”, 17 May 2023

<sup>4</sup> [Explanatory Notes to the Renters \(Reform\) Bill](#) [Bill 308 EN 2022-23] para 6

<sup>5</sup> Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2022-23, [Reforming the Private Rented Sector](#), HC 624, paras 49-50

<sup>6</sup> WMS HCWS778 [on Reforming the Private Rented Sector], 17 May 2023