



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Dame Meg Hillier MP

Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts
Sent by email

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Dear Dame Meg,

**Further information following the oral evidence session: Regulation of private renting,
Public Accounts Committee**

Thank you for inviting me to the Public Accounts Committee of 31 January. I am writing to give you further information on one of the points raised by the Committee.

Targeting funding for non-decent homes

The Committee asked whether the distribution of funding to local authorities reflects the geographic variation in the need for private rented sector enforcement. As I set out to the Committee, the distribution of funding to local authorities, as set annually in the Local Government Finance Settlement, does not include a distributional formula for every area of local government service expenditure. However, the distributional approach does account for a number of drivers of broader service expenditure, including measures linked to the level of deprivation in the local authority, which we know has some correlation with housing decency. The funding set out at the settlement is unringfenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how to use their resources in line with local priorities.

In addition to the financial envelope available to each local authority as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement, councils are also able to use income from fines (Civil Penalty Notices) to support enforcement activity. They can also meet the costs of running licensing schemes through charging fees to landlords. Since 2019, we have awarded £6.7 million of grant funding helping over 180 local authorities boost their enforcement work and support innovation. We have supported this with guidance and training for local authorities, and we will continue to work with the local government sector to share best practice.

Taken together, this means that local authorities have a range of tools at their disposal to tailor their enforcement approach to their local needs.

JEREMY POCKLINGTON