

Cllr David Renard, Chair of the Environment, Economy, Housing and transport board at the Local Government Association

Clive Betts MP
Chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

22 February 2022

Dear Mr Betts,

Local Government Association – Regulation of Social Housing

As Chair of the Local Government Association's (LGA) Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, I am writing pursuant to the oral evidence session undertaken by the committee into [the regulation social housing](#) on the 7 February.

In [the session](#), I confirmed that the LGA would follow up in writing on two items. Firstly, on the Complaints Handling Code and secondly on the Serious Detriment Test. I hope the below information provides sufficient clarity on over the LGA's position on these issues.

Complaints Handling Code:

Matt Vickers MP asked in the session how many local authorities had signed up to the complaints handling code. Firstly, this is not information that the LGA holds centrally. I can confirm that we do not hold this information. After discussion, we recommend that the Committee contact the Housing Ombudsman (HO) who may hold this information. We do understand that in cases where the HO are looking into whether a landlord is complying with the Code and considering issuing a systemic complaint handling failure order (CHFO), or investigating them, they will request a copy of their self-assessment. However, we suggest that the Committee engage with the HO directly.

Serious Detriment Test:

It is the LGA's view that the Regulator does not have sufficient powers to the extent that the Serious Detriment Test blocks the Regulator from intervening on consumer issues unless it believes tenants are at risk of severe harm. The proposed removal of the test, which is supported by the LGA, will enable the Regulator to take sufficient action against providers regardless of the level of harm. However, we do believe that the Regulator should prioritise intervention with landlords that are experiencing the most severe challenges.

The LGA welcomes proposals that will improve and strengthen the role of the Ombudsman in dealing with complaints. We believe that proposals should facilitate a quick resolution of complaints, achieve better outcomes for tenants and social landlords, while also having a focus on how safety concerns are raised and addressed.

Once again, thank you for inviting the LGA to give evidence at this important session. Should you require anything from the LGA in future, please do not hesitate to get in touch with my office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Renard', written in a cursive style.

Cllr David Renard