



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

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Dear Clive,

SOCIAL HOUSING WHITE PAPER UPDATE ANNOUNCEMENT

I am writing to you to let you know that my department has today [announced](#) a package of measures relating to the Government's work on social housing and the commitments set out in the Charter for Social Housing Residents: the Social Housing White Paper. This package will also help to deliver on the Government's commitment in the Levelling Up White Paper to halve the number of non-decent rented homes by 2030.

Everyone in this country deserves to live in a safe and decent home. It is unacceptable in a country like the UK that anyone should have thick black mould covering their walls and have to worry about their children breathing in spores; to be put at risk of slipping on a permanently wet floor; or to have water dripping through their ceiling onto electrical appliances putting their safety at risk. Yet too many people in social housing do live in circumstances such as these. And too often, social housing residents have simply not been listened to or felt respected by their landlords when they have tried to raise complaints, or simply talk to their landlord about these issues.

The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper sets out a wide range of measures designed to drive up service standards and fix a broken complaints system including by beefing up regulation of the sector, strengthening the Housing Ombudsman Service, and empowering residents to know and exercise their rights.

The Secretary of State and I know we need to go even further than this to make sure that we are delivering for tenants up and down the country, which is why one of our twelve missions set out in the Government's Levelling Up White Paper is to halve the number of non-decent rented homes by 2030.

The package of measures announced today represent important steps forward. These measures are:

- a. social housing regulation legislation
- b. a Resident Panel
- c. Naming and Shaming
- d. Tenant Factsheet

[Social Housing Regulation Legislation](#)

Social housing tenants deserve to be better informed by their landlords, treated with courtesy and respect and to have their problems quickly resolved. Unfortunately, this has not always been the experience of residents in social housing.

That is why the Government is bringing forward legislation which will ensure robust regulation of social housing landlords, a policy that has long been championed by the bereaved, survivors and residents of Grenfell.

The upcoming legislation will enable a new, proactive approach to the regulation of social housing landlords on consumer issues such as safety, transparency and tenant engagement, with new enforcement powers to tackle failing landlords. It will support a strong new regulatory regime which will drive a significant change in landlord behaviour, ensuring landlords focus on the needs of their tenants and are held to account for their performance.

The upcoming legislation has three core objectives:

1. To introduce a new, proactive consumer regulation regime so providers of social housing can be effectively held to account for the services they provide to tenants.
2. To refine the existing economic regulatory regime to make sure social housing providers are well governed and financially viable, to protect homes and investment in new supply.
3. To strengthen the enforcement powers of the Regulator for Social Housing ('the Regulator'), enabling it to take robust action where landlords are in breach of the standards.

The Government is publishing the draft clauses to demonstrate we are serious about reform of social housing regulation and that legislation is needed. Unfortunately, there will not be time for your committee to conduct pre-legislative scrutiny, nonetheless, the direction of travel is clear, and these reforms are well anticipated by parliamentarians and stakeholders. I would however welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this important legislation.

A Resident Panel

It is vital that the voices of tenants who live in social housing are heard directly by Government. That's why we are announcing the formation of a Resident Panel. The panel will consist of 250 social housing tenants, who will discuss the measures Government is taking to ensure social landlords provide their residents with a high-quality service, and invite residents to help us improve them.

The panel will meet once every four months for the foreseeable future, with residents having the opportunity to inform policy thinking, through sharing their lived experiences and suggesting ways that the Government can continue to influence landlords to drive change.

Naming and Shaming

Whilst there are many providers of social housing who provide high quality accommodation and services to tenants, there are too many who fail to meet the standards expected of them. The Government will take a stronger stance on naming and shaming social housing landlords who fail to meet the standards expected of them, by:

- publicising on social media where landlords have breached the Regulator's consumer standards or where the Housing Ombudsman has made its most serious findings of severe maladministration against them;
- engaging directly with these landlords where they have not self-referred to the Regulator. If a landlord finds they have breached a regulatory standard, they should let the Regulator know; those who fail to do so will be contacted by Ministers.

Tenant Fact Sheet

We know that too often tenants do not know who to turn to get help when they need it most. That's why we are publishing (and promoting) a factsheet to explain the role of the Housing Ombudsman Service and the Regulator. The fact sheet reinforces the clear message in our communications campaign [Make Things Right](#), which is encouraging residents to use their landlord's complaints process and where necessary the Housing Ombudsman Service if they're unhappy with the service from their social housing provider.

Both these organisations seek to improve the service delivered by social housing landlords, but there can be confusion about the respective roles of the two organisations, and where residents should go for support if needed.

The factsheet will outline the support on offer to residents, how landlords are held to account, and the changes that we are making to improve the services provided by the Housing Ombudsman Service and the Regulator of Social Housing.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the draft social housing regulation clauses and indeed any of these announcements with you. Please do contact my office to arrange this.

Additionally, I wish to note that I am looking forward to your upcoming report following the conclusion of the Committee's inquiry into the regulation of social housing.

Yours ever,



Eddie Hughes MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Rough Sleeping and Housing