

## **Written evidence submitted by Anonymous [RSH 010]**

### **Introduction**

I am a shared ownership leaseholder with a very small social landlord, Tower Hamlets Community Housing. The building I live in is only 14 years old. The reason I started looking into housing is the cladding/building safety crisis, which let me to meet a lot of residents in my neighbourhood, leaseholders and tenants alike. Problems have escalated for many people over the last years. Many shortcomings in social housing have been laid bare in a relatively short period of time, all with negative connotations for the residents.

### **How widespread and serious are the concerns about the quality of social housing?**

I believe the concerns about the quality of social housing to be very widespread indeed. Ranging over many different aspects of housing, affordability, quality of services and homes, accountability, overcrowding and redress.

### **What is the impact on social housing providers' resources, and therefore their ability to maintain and improve their housing stock, of the need to remediate building safety risks and retrofit their homes to make them more energy efficient?**

No doubt at the moment the impact on resources is massive. Housing providers have been put in a situation which in many cases is not of their own making with regards to both these subjects. However, in many cases this is also a lack of foresight, management and willingness to do anything more than what is required, and in many cases they do even less, especially in their duty of care. This is an apathy to the stated aims of their existence.

### **Is the current regime for regulating social housing fit for purpose?**

No! Tenants and leaseholders (really they are the same) find it very difficult indeed to get redress when something goes wrong, and it goes wrong very frequently. Service are executed at the bare minimum at full payments, which is nothing more than managed decline. The regulator should be able to withdraw licenses from landlords where they leave residents to languish in homes with leaks and mould which are not dealt with. Fines and prison sentences should be at the forefront of methods used by the regulator. Not long ago we saw Clarion Housing being let off, with not even a slap on the wrist, for the absolute horrors they have made people live in for years. If as a regulator you do this, you are not fit for purpose.

### **How clearly defined are the roles of the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman?**

Not clearly. I am unsure as to who to turn to in my time of need.

### **Does the current regime allow tenants to effectively resolve issues?**

No, and the regime should always be on the side of the tenant, unless the housing associations can prove otherwise. Very harsh penalties should be instituted for HA and their staff if they are in the wrong. We are talking about people's homes, the place where they should be comfortable and safe, the most important necessity for people together with food. What HA's are getting away with at the moment with absolutely no regulatory backlash is indecent.

**Do the regulator and ombudsman have sufficient powers to take action against providers?**

They probably do, I don't dare to answer, if not they should get far more power.

**What changes, if any, should the Government make to the Decent Homes Standard?**

The decent homes standard in my view is a fairly fair description of what a decent home should be. The decent homes standard should be updated with penalties for landlords when they don't make sure their stock adheres to these minimum standards. As soon as one home falls below this minimum standard the landlord fails in its duty. Sadly we see in many cases that landlords fall well short of the decent homes standard.

**Should the Decent Homes Standard be amended to include energy efficiency and other means of mitigating climate change, and if so how?**

In my view no. We should strive to these and include them in duties of the landlord to manage their stock to move to implement this in a timely manner, but they should be separated from the decent homes standard.

**Should all providers of social housing, not just councils, be required to register with the regulator?**

Yes.

**What challenges does the diversification of social housing providers pose for the regulatory system?**

None, as long as the regulator uses its powers in a consistent manner with ALWAYS the tenant as the most important person to protect and guard over.

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