

Written evidence submitted by Phyll Buchanan [RSH 027]

I have an ex-RtB leasehold house in an estate with mixed social housing. Our landlord is a Housing Association. I will try and capture the main concerns because I am shocked at how poor they are as landlords. I've lived in many different homes, freehold and renting, big and small - I'm over 60. Nothing has prepared me for the negligent way they manage our homes. I have never felt so unsafe. We would do a much better job appointing our own managing agent rather than be stuck with them managing our homes.

- Quality of social housing - My neighbour has an ancient gas boiler and rotten windows. There is Japanese Knotweed which they half heartedly sprayed for a few years but one of the neighbours just cuts it and bags it. The HA don't care.
- Does the current regime allow tenants to effectively resolve issues? - No, absolutely not. Our Housing Association is not fit for purpose. We have had 5 housing officers in 5 years. We have neighbours who make our life very difficult and they run rings around the officers.
- Governance is absent. They don't seem to be able to find the leases of their social housing flats. They are not prepared to let us see their ASB policy. We had a multi-disciplinary safeguarding meeting two years ago and they have not kept to any of their commitments. They have ignored their responsibilities under the Equality Act.
 - The police say the ASB we report belongs to the HA to deal with - nothing happens.
 - There is no obvious fire safety assessment or designated evacuation route despite having several flats / split houses close to each other. And previous arson attempts in a front entrance. The reason given is the communal alley we would use as an escape route has not been assigned to the Housing Association - presumably from the freeholder.
- Should the Decent Homes Standard be amended to include energy efficiency and other means of mitigating climate change, and if so how?
 - Yes, this would be sensible, but what would it mean? Fire safety is a bigger concern and may conflict with the choice of insulation. Who would inspect the work to ensure it has been done properly? Bins and flammable materials are already stored next to windows and doors, it is a serious fire risk but again this isn't tackled.
- Should all providers of social housing, not just councils, be required to register with the regulator.
 - Yes, this sounds sensible.
 - The standard accepted in social housing should be open to scrutiny. No one should be subjected to rule by bully.
 - Also empower local councils – they should be able to sanction the HA and have more control over their behaviour.

December 2021