

News story: Social housing green paper: a 'new deal' for social housing

The social housing green paper – published today (14 August 2018) – aims to rebalance the relationship between residents and landlords, tackle stigma and ensure that social housing can be both a stable base that supports people when they need it and support social mobility.

Residents across the country were asked for their views on social housing; almost 1,000 tenants shared their views with ministers at 14 events across the country, with over 7,000 submitting their opinions, issues and concerns online.

The consultation launched today, with this green paper, gives everyone the opportunity to submit views on proposals for the future of social housing and will run until 6 November 2018.

The green paper sets out 5 core themes:

- Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities
- Expanding supply and supporting home ownership
- Effective resolution of complaints
- Empowering residents and strengthening the regulator
- Ensuring homes are safe and decent

Secretary of State for Communities, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, said:

Providing quality and fair social housing is a priority for this government.

Our green paper offers a landmark opportunity for major reform to improve fairness, quality and safety to residents living in social housing across the country.

Regardless of whether you own your home or rent in the social sector, residents deserve security, dignity and the opportunities to build a better life.

With 4 million households living in social housing and this projected to rise annually, it's crucial that we tackle the issues facing both residents and landlords in social housing.

Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities

"I am made to feel less of a person than the person that has bought their house."

The green paper aims to break down inequalities in social housing and ensure

tenants feel at home in their community rather than seeing it as just a place to live.

The design and quality of homes and their surrounding area are at the heart of this paper, which will highlight the importance of good design ideas in newly built social housing. Rewarding the best neighbourhoods, for example, by funding events like street parties could ensure community pride is both encouraged and celebrated.

Expanding supply and supporting home ownership

“[There is] not enough social housing being built, where will my children live? They cannot afford a mortgage and private renting is too expensive with no security.”

In line with our commitment to deliver 300,000 homes per year by the mid-2020s, we’re putting in place processes to support the building of more social housing.

The paper outlines plans to build on the [new borrowing capacity](#) granted to local authorities by exploring new flexibilities on how they spend the money from homes sold under the Right to Buy scheme, and not requiring them to sell off vacant, higher value stock.

We’re also building on partnerships with housing associations to boost the supply of new affordable homes by considering the benefits of providing funding certainty to some housing associations over a longer period. We are looking at reforms to help people using affordable home ownership schemes – like shared ownership – to build up more equity in their homes.

Effective resolution of complaints

“The complaints process is opaque, inaccurate and chaotic with too many stages and little clarity on the roles and responsibilities of those involved.”

We want residents to have a stronger voice to influence decisions and challenge their landlord to improve living standards.

The paper asks how the current complaints process can be reformed so that it is quicker and easier; especially important when dealing with safety concerns. The consultation asks how residents can access the right advice to make a complaint and have it resolved quickly and effectively.

Empower residents and strengthen the regulator

“Their performance needs to be monitored by an independent authority so there is help when they don’t do these things.”

Delivering good quality and safe social homes with the right services from landlords relies on a robust regulatory framework. It has been almost eight years since the last review of social housing regulation and the proposals in

this green paper present the opportunity for a fresh look at the regulatory framework.

Alongside this, we are launching a [call for evidence](#) which seeks views on how the current regulatory framework is operating. This, along with questions about regulation in the green paper, will inform what changes are needed to deliver regulation that is fit for purpose.

Ensuring homes are safe and decent

“Fire safety concerns me most because a lot of young families reside in these blocks. This can be improved by educating residents.”

In the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower tragedy we took immediate steps to ensure residents safety. Remediation work to make buildings safe began and [the Government set aside £400 million](#) to cover the costs of this across the social housing sector. We also commissioned Dame Judith Hackitt to carry out an independent review of building regulations and fire safety. The review’s [final report](#) called for fundamental reform and we are committed to bringing forward legislation that delivers an overhaul of the system and gives residents a much stronger voice in an improved system of fire safety.

Progress has also been made on improving standards of decency. The green paper will consider how the Decent Homes Standard should be reviewed to ensure it delivers the right standards for social housing residents and reflects the Government’s current and forthcoming priorities.

[News story: CMA refers airport services merger for in-depth investigation](#)

Last week, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) said that it would [refer the deal for an in-depth \(phase 2\) investigation](#) unless Menzies offered acceptable solutions to address its competition concerns.

Both companies supply UK airlines and airports with support services, including the de-icing of aircraft engines and wings; ground handling (including passenger, ramp, baggage and airside cargo handling); and the cleaning and maintenance of aircraft interiors.

Following its initial (phase 1) investigation, the CMA identified competition concerns regarding de-icing services at Edinburgh, Glasgow and London Heathrow airports, and ground handling services at London Gatwick and Manchester airports.

As Menzies and Airline Services are close competitors at these airports, the deal could result in less choice for airlines operating there, potentially leading to higher prices and lower quality services.

Menzies has chosen not to offer proposals to address the CMA's concerns and so the merger will now be referred for an in-depth investigation by an independent group of CMA panel members. The deadline for the final decision is 28 January 2019.

Further information about the investigation will be published on the [case page](#).

Press release: James Brokenshire launches a new deal for social housing residents

A 'new deal' for social housing residents, as part of the government's commitment to make a housing market fit for the future has been launched by Secretary of State for Communities Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP.

The social housing green paper aims to rebalance the relationship between tenants and landlords, tackle stigma and ensure that social housing can be both a safety net and springboard into home ownership.

Our green paper aims to start a national discussion to collect views on how to improve social housing, based around 5 core principles:

- A safe and decent home which is fundamental to a sense of security and our ability to get on in life.
- Swift and effective resolution so that when residents have concerns about the safety or standard of their home they see results.
- Empowering residents and ensuring their voices are heard so that landlords are held to account.
- Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities, challenging the stereotypes that exists about residents and their communities.
- Building the social homes that we need and ensure that those homes can act as a springboard to home ownership.

The proposals will empower residents to hold their landlords to account and give them the support they need to seek redress when things go wrong. A tougher regulator will help drive up standards and ensure social homes are well managed and quality places to live.

With the experiences of those living in social housing brought to the forefront following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, over 8,000 residents from across the country have shared their views of social housing as part of the government's listening exercise.

Secretary of State for Communities the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Providing high quality and well managed social housing is a core priority for this government.

Our green paper offers a landmark opportunity for major reform to improve fairness, quality and safety for residents living in social housing across the country.

Regardless of whether you own your home or rent, residents deserve security, dignity and the opportunities to build a better life.

The aspirations and concerns of thousands of residents have shaped the government's new direction for social housing and are at the heart of the proposals in this consultative green paper:

- steps to speed up the complaints process, providing access to effective dispute resolution when something goes wrong and giving tenants more support in accessing the redress options available to them
- new reforms to make it easier for tenants to progress into home ownership, such as allowing them to purchase as little as 1% of their property each year through the government's Shared Ownership programme.
- strengthening the Regulator of Social Housing so it can focus on issues that matter most to tenants and has 'sharper teeth' to intervene when needed, ensuring social homes are well managed and of decent quality.
- allowing councils to continue to have choice over their use of fixed term tenancies, enabling them to offer residents greater security in their homes
- the introduction of performance indicators and new league tables, rebalancing the landlord/tenant relationship to hold bad practice to account and ensure residents are treated with dignity and respect

This move is the latest action by the government to build a housing market fit for the future, after £1.67 billion of new funding was made available in June to build 23,000 new affordable homes and social homes in areas that need it most.

The green paper launched today (14 August 2018), gives everyone the opportunity to feed in views on proposals for the future of social housing and will run until 6 November 2018.

In a separate move, to boost the number of local authority homes, a consultation into how councils spend the money from Right to Buy sales has also been launched today. It also looks at reforming the Right to Buy replacement target, to give a broader measure of government's impact on social housing.

This sets out proposals to make it easier for councils to replace properties sold under Right to Buy and build the affordable homes their communities need, continuing a programme that has helped almost 94,000 households onto the housing ladder since 2010.

As part of the preparing for the green paper publication, previous ministers led 14 tenant engagement events across the country with nearly 1,000 people directly feeding in their views. Over 7,000 people shared their views through our online engagement that closed on 16 March 2018.

The green paper gives everyone the opportunity to feed in views on proposals for the future of social housing and will run until 6 November 2018.

Legislation will be brought forward to put in place protections for lifetime tenants who have suffered domestic abuse. In the meantime, local authorities are strongly encouraged to give careful consideration to the welfare of victims of domestic abuse, by ensuring that where they are offering further tenancies to lifetime social tenants as a result of domestic abuse, such tenancies are granted on a lifetime basis.

This green paper marks the start of a review of the regulation of social housing. A call for evidence launched today asks how well the current regulatory framework is driving safe, decent and well managed homes, by well governed and financially robust landlords.

The Right to Buy consultation launched today seeks views on proposals for reforming the rules governing the use of Right to Buy receipts from the sale of council housing. It also seeks views on reforming the Right to Buy replacement target, to move towards a wider measure of government's impact in this area.

Options examined in the green paper to reduce staircasing options to 1% would only apply for new purchases under the Shared Ownership Programme.

Press release: Minister of State for Asia & the Pacific visits Southeast Asia

Foreign & Commonwealth Office Minister of State for Asia & the Pacific, Mark

Field, begins a six-country visit to Southeast Asia today (14 August), during which he will spend time in Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

During the visit, Mr Field will deliver a keynote speech on the UK's 'All of Asia' policy at Jakarta's Centre for Strategic and International Studies and lead the UK delegation for the second biannual Laos-UK political dialogue.

He will also visit the Halo Trust Cambodia HQ to meet demining teams, who with UK funding, have released over 70 sq km of land over the last 3 years.

The Minister will hold bilateral meetings with Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano of the Philippines, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, ASEAN Secretary-General Dato Lim Jock Hoi, and meet members of civil society and the business and economic communities.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Mark Field said:

I am hugely excited by the opportunities this visit presents. I look forward to continuing the ongoing conversation around our post-Brexit relationship with ASEAN and its members, and deepening the UK's ties with one of the world's most dynamic and vibrant regions.

Further information

News story: Unlawful Immigration Adviser Convicted for a second time

On Monday 4 June 2018, at Leeds Crown Court, Mr. Chaudry Mohammad Saghir, aged 73 years, of Gibbet Street, Halifax, West Yorkshire pleaded guilty to five counts of providing unqualified immigration advice and services.

The offences took place between 5 April 2008 and 31 December 2016 at Law Chamber Kashmir Foundation, Gibbet Street, Halifax, an organisation established by Mr. Saghir. Mr. Saghir is not a qualified person and the Law Chamber Kashmir Foundation is unregulated. On 16 September 2016 Mr. Saghir accompanied an appellant to a hearing at Bradford Immigration and Asylum Chamber. A member of tribunal staff, knowing that he was unqualified, challenged Mr. Saghir who left the building. This incident was referred to the OISC and an investigation was initiated.

Mr. Saghir was previously convicted of fifteen counts of providing unqualified immigration services as a result of an earlier OISC prosecution

for which he received 12 months imprisonment at Bradford Crown Court on 15 November 2005.

On Monday 13th August 2018 Mr. Saghir appeared before His Honour Judge Gordon at Leeds Crown Court for sentencing.

Mr. Saghir was sentenced to 13 months imprisonment suspended for two years and an electronically monitored curfew between 7pm and 7am for a period of six months. In sentencing HHJ Gordon said:

"These are serious matters, you have been previously convicted of 41 offences on 9 occasions and in November 2005 you were convicted at Bradford Crown Court of 15 offences contrary to Section 91 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, precisely the same as the offences for which you are being sentenced today. You knew what you were doing, it was deliberate conduct"

Speaking about the decision, Deputy Immigration Services Commissioner, Dr Ian Leigh, said, "This is not a technical or victimless crime, Chaudry Mohammad Saghir was advising vulnerable people who could not handle their immigration cases on their own. They trusted him and he betrayed that trust. I am delighted with the outcome in this case."