

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.”

News story: New Competition: Predictive Cyber Analytics

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) is launching a competition to seek novel approaches to predict and counter cyber threats in defence and security.

£1 million of funding is available in Phase 1 of this competition to fund proof-of-concept technologies. Additional funding is anticipated to be available for future phases to move towards a deployable solution.

Further details about the competition are in the [summary document](#)

The competition will close at midday on 5 November 2018

Details on how to apply will be included in the full competition document which will be available soon. If you have any queries on this competition, please do contact us at accelerator@dstl.gov.uk or [sign up](#) for alerts.

News story: Exclusive schedule tender for Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS)

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) is inviting organisations to submit a tender for an exclusive schedule under the 2013 Standard Civil Contract (as amended) for a contingency period in specific courts from 1 October 2018.

This is following some organisations not accepting the [previous offer](#) to deliver HPCDS services beyond 30 September 2018.

The tender is open to any organisation that has successfully verified its tender for a contract in the Housing and Debt categories through the main, supplemental or further face to face procurement processes.

Contracts will be offered for an initial period of 12 months subject to the LAA's rights of early termination and the right to extend the contract up to a further 1 year.

Schemes available through this tender

The LAA is offering up to four contracts in each of the following schemes through this procurement process:

- Bodmin and Truro
- Chichester, Horsham and Worthing
- Colchester
- Winchester

These schemes will be scheduled through rotas. Successful organisations will be required to attend and deliver HPCDS services where requested by clients at all housing possession listings included in the relevant scheme during their allocated rota weeks.

How contract work will be allocated

The allocation of contract work to an organisation will depend upon the number of contracts awarded in a scheme. Therefore, organisations must be willing to deliver:

- a minimum of one week in four, up to;
- a maximum of all weeks of a HPCDS rota in the scheme tendered for (the entire scheme)

How to tender

Tenders must be submitted using the LAA's e-Tendering system.

To submit a compliant tender all organisations must submit a response to the Selection Questionnaire (SQ) that forms part of this tender opportunity and submit a response to the relevant Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the category they wish to deliver.

Further information

[Civil 2018 contracts tender](#) – to find out more and download the Information For Applicants document

[e-Tendering system](#) – to submit your tender