

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.

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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.