

Social housing tenants put at the heart of government reforms

Over 250 tenants will meet today (26 November) to launch the group that will directly influence the government's plans on improving social housing conditions and bringing about sector change.

Members of the Social Housing Quality Residents will share their experiences with ministers, inform policy change and ensure resident voices are properly heard as the government drives forward its social housing reforms.

The launch follows the Housing Secretary's action, announced this week, against Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) after it failed to treat hazardous mould leading to the tragic death of Awaab Ishak.

In a crackdown on poor standards, Michael Gove has stripped the housing association of new taxpayer funding for housing – until the Regulator of Social Housing has concluded its investigation and RBH can prove it is a responsible landlord.

This serves as a warning to other housing providers, with Gove prepared to take robust action against those that are letting down tenants.

Housing Secretary Michael Gove said:

This government will not stand for any tenant being mistreated and we are acting to ensure they get the safe and decent homes they deserve.

For too long, tenants have been denied a proper voice – this ends today. Our new residents panel will ensure that tenants are at the heart of reforms to social housing.

I look forward to working with the panel to drastically raise the standard of social housing across the country.

Housing Secretary Michael Gove and Minister for Social Housing Baroness Scott of Bybrook will attend the launch event to thank residents for their important contribution in the government's work to improve social housing for tenants. Ahead of the launch, panel members from across the country have shared their views and hopes for the panel:

Emma from East of England said:

I would like to bring back the stronger relationships between tenants and their housing association.

Quality of repairs has also become an issue, things being replaced for a lesser quality and the tenant is supposed to accept it in their home.

Social landlords need to become more involved with their tenants and rebuild the fractured relationships.

Roy from the East Midlands said:

I have been an involved resident for nearly 12 years, and have worked tirelessly to improve the services provided by our landlord.

It's not always been easy and on many occasions it has been very frustrating. But we saw a chink of light with the publication of the Social Housing White Paper, as we might at least be able to make the services supplied by our landlord fit for purpose

Abbey from the South East said:

I am passionate about improving social housing. I'm a scrutiny panel member and a block rep, but this initiative had the possibility to create change on a larger and less local scale. I would like to make sure that voice is heard.

Karen from the South West said:

I want to help improve the condition of social housing and also help remove the stigma attached to social housing.

The panel forms part of the government's commitment in the Social Housing White Paper to rebalance the relationship between tenants and landlords.

Residents will shape the direction of the panel, with options to cover topics like how to raise awareness of the complaints process, or improving tenants' access to information about their landlords.

Further information:

- Panel members will be involved a series online sessions and focus groups over the next year – with the full panel convening every 4 months for an update on progress.
- More information on the Social Housing Residents Panel is available [here](#).