



Ministry of Housing,
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Invitation to a Social Housing Green Paper Consultation Event

Dear resident,

As you may be aware, my Department has recently published a Green Paper, 'A new deal for social housing' which renews and deepens the Government's commitment to social housing and the people that live in it. This consultation document was announced by the Prime Minister following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower in June last year, which brought the significance of social housing to the attention of the nation.

Last year, the Prime Minister asked Ministers to commit time to listening to the stories and experiences of people living in social housing. From October 2017 to April this year, Ministers personally attended 12 engagement events across the country. They met almost 1,000 social housing residents to understand their concerns and experiences of living in social housing. More than 7,000 people also responded online to questions about their experiences.

This Green Paper, 'A new deal for social housing', has been shaped by the conversations that Ministers had with residents at these events. It proposes fundamental reform to ensure social homes provide an essential, safe, well managed service for those who need it. The Green Paper is underpinned by five principles:

1. Ensuring homes are safe and decent

Residents were not only concerned about safety, but also the quality and maintenance of their homes. The Government has welcomed Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety and is clear that more must be done to support residents and landlords to properly engage on issues of building safety. The Green Paper also considers whether the current 'Decent Homes Standard' is demanding enough and delivers the right outcomes for social homes.

2. Effective resolution of complaints

We heard residents' concerns about how complaints were dealt with when things go wrong. We want to make the process of handling and resolving complaints faster, easier and more effective. We also want to explore whether more could be done to strengthen mediation opportunities so landlords and residents can resolve disputes locally, and help residents to access the right advice.

3. Empowering residents and strengthening the Regulator

We want to empower residents and ensure that their voices are heard, so they can hold their landlords to account. The Green Paper contains proposals to assess landlords against standards that matter to residents, and to publish performance against these standards in a clear and consistent manner. We are also seeking views on how to strengthen choice over the services residents receive. We want to strengthen the regulatory framework for social housing so that it remains fit for purpose, including how the Regulator of Social Housing can act when things go wrong. We have also published a call for evidence which seeks views on how the current regulatory framework is working.

4. Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities

Stigma was one of the most consistent themes raised by residents. We are seeking views on a number of proposals to tackle this including ways to celebrate thriving communities, encourage greater professionalisation, and promoting good social housing design. We are also exploring options for improving neighbourhood management and addressing anti-social behaviour, another key issue for residents.

5. Expanding supply and supporting home ownership

Residents told us that they wanted to see more affordable homes delivered. We published a consultation which sets out options for exploring new flexibilities around how local authorities can use the money they get from selling their homes through the Right to Buy scheme to make it easier for them to build more homes. We will also explore how we can help people living in affordable home ownership schemes, such as Shared Ownership, progress more easily to owning outright.

The Green Paper contains a number of options and ideas for consultation. I therefore want to continue the conversation with residents and I am keen to hear directly from you in response to these ideas. I would like to explore the areas of the Green Paper that matter to you most and understand your views on the ways we propose to address these issues. It is important to me that your views are heard and fed into the consultation process.

My Department has been working with representatives from tenant organisations and landlords across the country to deliver another programme of tenant events. I am pleased to tell you that I am planning to visit your region and I hope you are able to join me for this discussion.

The Northern Housing Consortium has kindly agreed to host and organise an event on **Monday 8th October** at **Your Homes Newcastle, Tree Top Village, Walker Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 3JW, between 12.00 – 3.30pm**. The event will give you an opportunity to share your suggestions and ideas for informing our approach to social housing going forward.

I look forward to meeting and hearing from you.



MRS HEATHER WHEELER

