

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.