

# 'Ofsted-style' inspections and unlimited fines for failing social landlords

- Social housing landlords could face unlimited fines for failing tenants
- New Social Housing Regulation Bill will drive up standards and bolster regulator's power to act
- Tenants put on level playing field with ability to rate services and access information about landlord
- Bill will tackle damp, cold and unsafe homes and ensure landlords don't ignore tenants

Failing social housing landlords could face unlimited fines and Ofsted-style inspections, under the Social Housing Regulation Bill set to be introduced to Parliament today (8 June 2022).

The move will mean more people living in decent, well looked-after homes enjoying the quality of life they deserve.

The Regulator of Social Housing will have stronger powers to issue unlimited fines, enter properties with only 48 hours' notice – down from 28 days – and make emergency repairs where there is a serious risk to tenants, with landlords footing the bill.

In a major reset of power between tenants and landlords, residents will be able to demand information and rate their landlord as part of new satisfaction measures. The Bill will form a key part of the government's mission to level up across the country and deliver on the people's priorities.

Tenants will have a direct line to government, with a new 250-person residents panel convening every 4 months to share their experiences with ministers, inform policy thinking and help drive change in the sector.

The Bill is the latest step in addressing the systemic issues identified following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, not just on the safety and quality of social housing, but about how tenants are treated by their landlords.

**Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove said:**

“In 2022 it is disgraceful that anyone should live in damp, cold and unsafe homes, waiting months for repairs and being routinely ignored by their landlord. These new laws will end this injustice and ensure the regulator has strong new powers to take on rogue social landlords.”

“We are driving up the standards of social housing and giving residents a voice to make sure they get the homes they deserve. That is levelling up in action.”

The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill being introduced today removes the serious detriment test – a legislative barrier that once axed will make it easier for the Regulator to tackle poor performing landlords.

The biggest social housing providers will face regular inspections and the Levelling Up Secretary will continue to name and shame worst offenders to make sure residents are living in good quality homes.

Earlier this month, the [Levelling Up Secretary called out Britain's biggest social landlord Clarion](#) after the Housing Ombudsman found severe cases of maladministration.

The Bill will also mean landlords will need to have a named person who will be responsible for health and safety requirements. And tenants of housing associations will be able to request information from their landlord, similar to how the Freedom of Information Act works for council housing.

Today's move shows the government is delivering on its levelling up missions, taking serious steps to halve the number of poor-quality rented homes by 2030.

**Lord John Bird, crossbench peer and founder of The Big Issue, said:**

“I'm pleased to hear that the government has committed to introducing legislation through the Social Housing Regulation Bill to strengthen protections for private renters and socially rented sector. It is vital for all residents to live in a safe, secure, good quality and affordable home.”

“These protections for renters is a welcome step from the government, and I hope to see further preventative measures put in place to help people, especially those who are already struggling to make ends meet, remain in their homes and not put at risk of homelessness. There is still more that can be done to safeguard low-income renters and reduce inequality, so let's make sure we carry on building on this progress.”

**Kate Henderson, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation, says:**

“Having a home that is warm and dry, safe, secure and affordable is the right of every person in this country. For social housing providers this means providing high quality living standards in every home and carrying out repairs on time.”

“Government data shows that on average social homes are better quality than other rented homes, however we have seen instances where social housing tenants have had to live in substandard properties and this is not acceptable.”

“We welcome the aims of this bill to give tenant’s greater powers and improve access to swift and fair redress. Over 200 housing associations have already taken steps to strengthen relationships between residents and landlords by signing up to Together with Tenants, a sector-led initiative which sets new standards for tenant and landlord relationships.

“Alongside this, the National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute of Housing are working together to support housing associations to take collective action on quality issues, details of which will be published imminently.”

The Bill will enable the Regulator of Social Housing to regulate consumer standards proactively, as committed to in the Social Housing White Paper. Abolishing the serious detriment test will allow the regulator to intervene on grounds of a breach or potential breach of consumer standards, whether or not tenants face ‘serious detriment’.

The Secretary of State will continue to name and shame landlords who have breached consumer standards or where the Housing Ombudsman has found maladministration against them.

Alongside Bill introduction, the government is seeking views on electrical safety standards for social housing via a [consultation](#) opening today, so that tenants can feel safe in their homes.

This marks the latest step in response to the Grenfell Tower fire, following on from the [Building Safety Act](#) and last year’s [Fire Safety Act](#).

The government is committed to delivering a better deal for renters. The Renters Reform Bill announced in the Queen’s Speech will give tenants much needed security. More details will be published shortly in the Private Rented Sector White Paper.