

Press release: Government moves towards a shake-up of broken housing complaints system

Dissatisfied tenants and homeowners across the country may be offered a lifeline as government considers options to ensure that no-one is left battling with their landlord or builder to resolve issues with their home, Housing Secretary Sajid Javid has announced.

From broken boilers to cracks in walls, the current choice of schemes risks leaving thousands without answers, with others having to manoeuvre between at least 4 different services just to work out where to register a complaint.

An 8 week [consultation](#) beginning today (18 February 2018) will use people's experiences to shape a simpler and better complaints system, so future disputes can be resolved faster and consumers can access compensation where it is owed.

Options considered in the consultation include:

- introducing a single housing ombudsman to cover the whole of the housing market
- if homes builders should be required to join an ombudsman scheme, following on our commitment to expand redress to tenants of private landlord
- naming and shaming poor practice to help tackle the worst abuses

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid said:

For too long, tenants and homeowners have navigated multiple complaints procedures to resolve disputes about everyday household repairs and maintenance.

Fixing this housing crisis is about more than just building homes, it's ensuring people have the answers available when something goes wrong.

Today's top-to-bottom review shows government is working hard to deliver a better and simpler system.

Unlike other areas, such as financial services that have a single and accountable ombudsman, housing has over 4 different complaints bodies.

In the private rented sector, there is currently no obligation for landlords to register with a complaints system and this can often leave thousands who do not use a property agent without any option for redress.

House builders are responsible for fixing incomplete work in new build homes but when this does not happen many consumers with snagging issues can find that they have nowhere left to turn.

This is just one of the steps the government is taking to solve the country's housing crisis and improve the rental sector which 8.6 million households are part of.

From April we are introducing new measures to crack down on rogue landlords to ensure tenants are not being exploited by unscrupulous landlords who profit from providing overcrowded, squalid and sometimes dangerous homes.

Today's consultation will be crucial to improving the complaints process across the market, driving forward a higher standard for service in housing.

The 8 week [consultation](#) will provide an invaluable insight into the views and experiences of people, specifically addressing 3 key areas:

- the effectiveness of the current complaint process, or if more can be done to improve the experience
- what standard of service should be expected and if a single housing ombudsman is needed
- how to fill the existing gaps in the current system, such as private landlords not having to register with a redress scheme

The consultation will begin on the 18 February, with an online form being available to housing consumers until the 16 April 2018.

This consultation is open to all including: tenants, landlords, homeowners, and existing ombudsman schemes.

The Ministry will provide more information on future proposals to the housing redress process following the conclusion of this consultation.

Issues relating to social tenants will be considered in the social housing green paper, which is due to be published later in the year.

Currently, there are multiple providers of redress that cover some aspects of home buying and renting, but not all. Membership of ombudsman schemes is compulsory for some groups, but not for others.

In England, there are currently 3.9 million households in the social rented sector and 4.7 million in the private rented sector.