



DEBATE PACK

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General Debate on Social Housing

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Summary

There will be a General Debate on Social Housing in the House of Commons Chamber on 13 June 2019.

The need for subsidised housing provision has long been recognised. The cost of private sector housing that meets acceptable standards, compared with the level and distribution of incomes and assets, means that significant numbers of households lack the resources to make a demand for decent housing effective in the market. Without subsidised housing, these households can fail to obtain housing of a decent standard.

Historically, homes for social rent (with rents set at around 50% of market rents) and affordable home ownership have been the main source of new affordable housing. However, 2011 saw the introduction of social sector development with rents of up to 80% of market rents (referred to as affordable rents). According to some commentators, this has undermined the ability of even the social sector to supply housing that is truly affordable.

This debate pack contains a summary of information and statistics relevant to current policy and discussion on the social rented sector. The pack focuses on England but sections 1.7 to 1.9 provide links to policy developments in the devolved administrations.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Social rented housing supply

The need for subsidised housing provision has long been recognised. The cost of private sector housing that meets acceptable standards, compared with the level and distribution of incomes and assets, means that significant numbers of households lack the resources to make a demand for decent housing effective in the market. Without subsidised housing, these households can fail to obtain housing of a decent standard.

Commentators are increasingly making the point that, in addition to a crisis in housing supply, England is in the grip of a crisis of affordability. In the foreword to the June 2017 IPPR report, [What more can be done to build the homes we need?](#), Sir Michael Lyons said: “We would stress that it is not just the number built but also the balance of tenures and affordability which need to be thought through for an effective housing strategy.” The [2017 UK Housing Review Briefing Paper](#) (September 2017) argued that **while supply is of critical importance, “so is the rather more neglected issue of affordability, in both the private and social housing sectors.”**

Historically, homes for social rent (with rents set at around 50% of market rents) and affordable home ownership have been the main source of new affordable housing. However, 2011 saw the introduction of social sector development with rents of up to 80% of market rents (referred to as affordable rents). According to some commentators, this has undermined the ability of even the social sector to supply housing that is truly affordable.

Estimates of need for social rented provision

There were **1.11 million households on social housing waiting lists** in England on 1 April 2018.¹ Local authorities are coming under increasing pressure to secure housing for low-income tenants as homelessness rises: there were 83,700 homeless households in temporary accommodation at the end of 2018, 74% more than at the end of 2010.²

The current Conservative Government was elected in 2017 with a manifesto pledge to meet the 2015 commitment to deliver 1 million homes by the end of 2020 **and to “deliver half a million more by the end of 2022.”** The Autumn Budget 2017 set out an ambition “to put England on track to deliver 300,000 new homes a year.” There is no target to develop a specific number of social rented homes. Local planning authorities are expected to plan to meet housing need within their areas. Chapter 5 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (revised in February 2019) states:

To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment,

¹ MHCLG, [Live tables on rents, lettings and tenancies](#), Table 600

² MCHLG, [Live tables on homelessness](#), Temporary accommodation table TA1

conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance.

[...]

Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:

- a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and
- b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

[Research](#) commissioned by the National Housing Federation (NHF) and Crisis from Heriot-Watt University identified a need for 340,000 homes each year in England to 2031 of which 145,000 “must be affordable homes”. The press release for the research breaks down the type of affordable homes needed:

1. **90,000 should be for social rent**
2. 30,000 should be for intermediate affordable rent
3. 25,000 should be for shared ownership³

[In Everybody in: How to end homelessness in Great Britain](#) (2018) Crisis called for, amongst other things:

Building 100,500 new social homes each year for the next 15 years to meet the needs of homeless people and people on low incomes – including those at risk of homelessness.

[Shelter’s commission on the future of social housing](#) reported in January 2019. The Commission recommended an “historic renewal of social housing”:

Our commission recommends a historic renewal of social housing, with a 20-year programme to deliver 3.1 million more social homes. This will allow the benefits of social housing to be offered much more widely – providing both security for those in need and a step up for young families trying to get on and save for their future.

[The 2019 UK Housing Review](#) (chapter 2) notes that “everyone now says they want to build more social housing, the question is how many units and how will they be paid for”. The Review goes on:

In England, whatever the precise scale of the challenge it inevitably demands a significant commitment of new resources, even if ways are found to supplement them.

³ NHF Press Release, [England short of 4 million homes](#), 18 May 2018

The Library paper: [Tackling the under-supply of housing in England](#) (section 3.1) sets out some ideas advanced within the sector for meeting the funding gap.

Statistics on social housing supply

Social housing stock

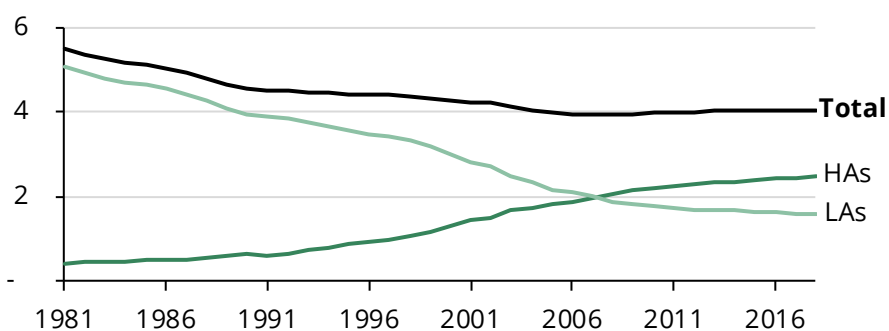
In England in April 2018, there were 1.59 million homes owned by local authorities and 2.54 million homes owned by housing associations – a total of **4.13 million homes owned by social housing providers**.⁴

As well as homes for social rent, social housing providers can own other types of housing, including: other low-cost rental homes, low cost home ownership, and homes for sale or rent at market rates.

The chart below shows the trend in the number of homes rented from local authorities and housing associations (whether for social rent or other kinds of rent). **The number of homes rented from social housing providers has declined in the long-term**, from 5.49 million homes in 1981 to 4.05 million homes in 2018. This decline has primarily been driven by a fall in the number of homes rented from local authorities, while the number of homes rented from housing associations has risen.

The decline in homes rented from social providers can be attributed both to a decline in new supply (discussed below) and depletion of existing stock through Right to Buy (see section 1.1).

Housing rented from social providers has declined
Total homes rented from local authorities (LAs) and housing associations (HAs), England 1981-2018



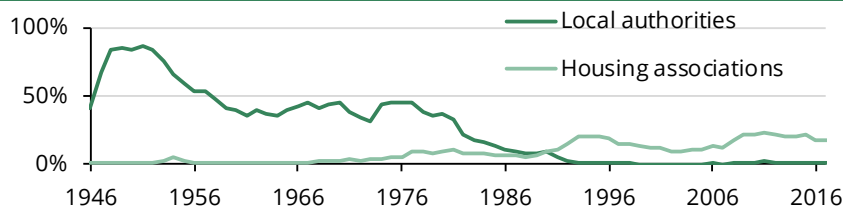
Source: MHCLG, [Live Table 104](#)

New supply of social housing

Around 18% of new homes built in England in 2017/18 were built by housing associations (17%) or local authorities (1%). As the chart below shows, the proportion of new homes built by local authorities has declined substantially since the post-war years, while the proportion built by housing associations has increased somewhat.

⁴ MHCLG, [Live tables on dwelling stock](#), Table 100

Proportion of new homes completed by local authorities and housing associations, England



Source: MHCLG, [Live Table 209](#)

Further historic statistics on building by local authorities and housing associations are available in the Library briefing [Tackling the under-supply of housing](#) (section 2.3) and its associated Excel download (available [at this link](#) or on the landing page).

Not all homes built by housing associations and local authorities are used as social housing.

Statistics on the supply of new affordable housing are [published by MHCLG](#) and explained further in the Library briefing [What is affordable housing?](#) (section 3). A total of 47,355 new affordable homes were delivered in 2017-18, of which:

- 57% were homes for Affordable Rent (i.e., rents that can be set at up to 80% of market rates)
- 23% were homes for Shared Ownership
- 14% were for social rent.

The remainder of homes delivered were for other forms of intermediate rent or affordable home ownership.

The proportion of new affordable housing that is for social rent has declined substantially in recent years (see chart). Social rent made up 87% of new affordable housing supply in 1991-92, compared with 14% in 2017-18.

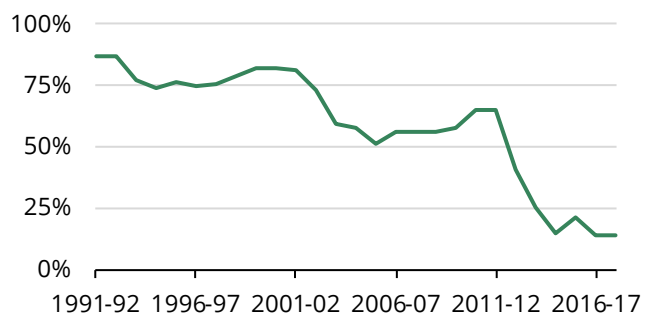
Local data

The following Library dashboards provide local-level information on social housing:

- [Local authority data: housing supply](#) has statistics on housing stock by tenure and new affordable housing supply, for local authorities in England.
- [Constituency data: housing tenure](#) has 2011 census data on the number of households renting from a social landlord.

Decline in social rented supply

New homes for social rent as a % of all new affordable housing supply, England



Funding for social rented housing provision

Sector submissions to the 2016 Autumn Statement called for a reconfiguration of the Affordable Homes Programme to allow providers

more flexibility over the type of housing developed. **There were calls to encourage development at social rent levels to reduce pressure on Housing Benefit expenditure and to increase housing options for people on a low income without having to rely on Housing Benefit to assist with rent payments.** The [Autumn Statement](#) *did* announce the relaxation of restrictions on grant funding “to allow providers to deliver a mix of homes for affordable rent and low cost ownership, to meet the housing needs of people in different circumstances and at different stages of their lives.” Subsequently, the [Housing White Paper](#) (February 2017) set out “a comprehensive package of reform to increase housing supply and halt the decline in housing affordability.” The White Paper did not contain a specific commitment to increase the supply of social rented housing.

The National Housing Federation’s (NHF) [submission to the Autumn Budget 2017](#) called for the additional £1.4 billion of investment announced during the Autumn Statement 2016 to be made available for bidding “at the earliest opportunity” and for the “unallocated” £1.1bn from the Starter Homes programme to be applied to “sustained capital investment in genuinely affordable homes for rent.”

In October 2017, the Government [announced](#) an increase in funding for the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme of £2 billion, bringing total funding up to £9.1 billion. **The additional £2 billion “will support the delivery of at least 12,500 social rent homes in areas of high affordability outside London.”**
[\[HL Deb 4 June 2019 c2\]](#)

A further £2 billion initiative was [announced](#) in September 2018. Under this scheme, associations can apply for funding and enter into longer-term partnerships up to 2028/29. This funding will ‘kick-in’ in 2022. The NHF [described](#) this as lending further “long term certainty to associations’ operating environment”.

The NHF’s [submission to Budget 2018](#) called for measures to build on Homes England’s strategic partnerships and the £2 billion up to 2028/29 to deliver “**ten-year certainty over housing investment**”. There was also an emphasis, as there had been in previous submissions, **on a more flexible funding system:**

We are keen to see Homes England consolidate its existing funding streams into a single fund, and to remove restrictions around where future funding for social rent can be spent. Instead, Homes England should be allowed to work with local areas, to deliver according to local need.

In October 2018 the Chancellor announced the lifting of borrowing caps from local authority Housing Revenue Accounts with effect from 29 October 2018. This is expected to enable councils to increase house building by an additional 10,000 homes per year.

The announcement was warmly greeted within the sector. The Resolution Foundation commented on the potential impact:

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) estimates that councils could complete an additional 20,000 new units by 2023-24 (and

we estimate a further 7,000-plus units could be started by this point). Construction on this scale would represent a significant step-change for local authorities: in England and Wales they built a mere 1,900 new homes in 2017-18.⁵

The Resolution Foundation [blog](#) identifies potential savings for individuals due to lower social rent levels compared to private rents, and for the State due to Housing Benefit savings. Several factors are identified as explanations for the OBR's assessment of "uncertainty around local authorities' use of the extra borrowing room as 'medium to high'" including:

- The continuation of the Right to Buy which could temper councils' appetite to build. Some authorities may prefer to build through local housing companies.
- The requirement for additional funds to combine with borrowing: "money available for affordable homes still below the levels we saw in 2008-2010, and much already allocated to ongoing activities, councils may not be able to take full advantage of new borrowing opportunities without additional grant finance."
- Existing in-house capabilities of many councils to manage complex building programmes should not be over-estimated.⁶

Commentators note that of the £70 billion in Government funding committed to housing development up to 2023, £55 billion is earmarked to support the private market and first-time buyers. 21% of the total is allocated to affordable housing.⁷ There are calls for a 're-balancing' of expenditure between the social and private sectors.

In [Funding new social and affordable housing](#) (November 2018) Professor Kenneth Gibb concluded:

There is only a finite set of well-established ways in which sub-market housing can be delivered involving different combinations of elements from land, finance, construction costs and equity (including subsidy). Whichever combination is chosen, political support for programmes and the necessity to provide value for money must be established. There is no silver bullet.

November 2018 also saw the publication of a report by Network Homes, [Why aren't housing associations building more homes](#). The report addresses the criticism directed at housing associations for "not building enough social rented housing while making higher surpluses than ever before." The summary notes:

Network Homes has analysed the relative costs of building homes during our 2008-11 grantfunded programme and our 2015-18/2016-21 grant-funded programme. The results show:

- our average cost to build each home has increased 42% or by £85,000 to £285,000 per home in less than ten years

⁵ Resolution Foundation blog, [Lifting the lid on the borrowing cap](#), 31 October 2108

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Inside Housing*, Perry J: "[The Government commits billions to private housing – it's time to fund social housing instead](#)," 4 April 2019 [subscription required]

- adjusting for RPI inflation between 2010 and 2018, our average build cost per home would be £247,210 today. Actual costs per home are 15.3% higher
- we are receiving on average a third of the grant per home today (taken across all projects and affordable tenures) that we received in 2008-2011: £33,600 per home compared to £102,641 per home
- In percentage terms we received over 51% of the cost of each home in government grant in 2008-11 compared to less than 12% today
- Based on our sample, each subsidised affordable home today costs Network Homes on average over £250,000 from loans, reserves and income from sales compared to less than £100,000 just seven years ago
- to convert all homes to social rent in just the seven schemes analysed from our current programme would cost Network an additional £81.4m, or a weighted average of £162,820 per home, on top of internal subsidies already provided

1.1 The Right to Buy

The statutory Right to Buy (RTB) was introduced in October 1980. To date, around 2 million council properties in England have been sold. The single most contentious aspect of the RTB has been the failure to replace the sold stock. There was no commitment to replace the sold homes when the statutory RTB was introduced.

Alongside the Coalition Government's commitment to 'reinvigorate' the RTB by increasing the discount levels, a commitment was made to one-for-one replacement of the sold properties. There is no requirement to replace social rented homes on a 'like for like' basis.

RTB sales have increased since discount levels were increased, (rising from 2,638 in 2011/12 to 12,876 in 2017/18). In its March 2018 statistical release, the Government stated for the first time that housing starts are "falling short" of the commitment to replace additional sales within three years.⁸ Subsequent releases have confirmed that this is still the case ([the latest release](#) was published in March 2019 and has statistics on sales, replacements and receipts).

On publication of the [March 2018 statistical bulletin](#) the then Housing Minister, Dominic Raab, issued a Written Statement commenting on the failure to meet the three-year replacement target:

Our record on the provision of affordable housing is a strong one with over 357,000 affordable homes delivered since 2010. This included 257,000 homes for rent. Whilst 69,000 local authority homes have been sold since 2010, there have been 127,000 new homes provided for social rent during the same period.

The Government is committed to a step change in council house building. However, statistics released today show that while the number of homes available for social rent has increased, some

⁸ MHCLG, [Right to Buy Sales in England: October to December 2017](#), p8

local authorities have not been building enough Right to Buy replacements to match the pace of their sales. It is clear that local authorities need to increase their rate of delivery of new homes.⁹

The [Statement](#) referred to additional funding announced in the Autumn Budget 2017 and went on to raise the possibility of additional flexibility on authorities' use of capital receipts.¹⁰

August 2018 saw the publication of a consultation paper: [Use of receipts from Right to Buy sales](#), submissions were accepted up to 9 October 2018. The paper set out ideas aimed at changing the rules on local authorities' use of money raised from RTB sales "in order to make it easier for them to build more homes."¹¹ Responses to the consultation are being analysed.

The Local Government Association's (LGA) position is that the RTB has become "unsustainable" and has called for councils to be given powers to set discounts locally and replace every home sold:

Councils support people's aspiration to own their own home and Right to Buy is one way of doing this.

However, selling council homes at a discount of nearly half price had led to a social housing fire sale that threatens the future of the scheme. The rate of homes sold under RTB combined with the restrictions on councils is making replacing homes sold virtually impossible.

This loss of social rented housing risks pushing more families into the private rented sector, driving up housing benefit spending and rents and exacerbating our homelessness crisis. This is particularly concerning as many of the homes sold through the scheme ended up being rented out privately at more expensive rates.

For RTB to work, councils must be able to replace every home sold. Councils must be allowed to set RTB discounts locally, retain RTB sale receipts in full to replace sold homes, and be given the freedom to borrow to build new affordable homes and play a lead role in tackling the country's housing shortage.¹²

On publication of the June 2018 statistical release Terrie Alafat, chief executive at the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), called for the suspension of the RTB.¹³ This call was repeated in February 2019:

More than 165,000 of the most affordable rented homes have been lost across England in just six years, according to new analysis from the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH).

The organisation is predicting that loss will reach 199,000 by 2020 – making it increasingly difficult for people on lower incomes to access a decent home at a price they can afford.

Funding for social rent, which tends to be around 30-40 per cent cheaper than market rent, was cut by the coalition government in 2010. Since then, funding has been targeted towards homes for 'affordable rent', which can be up to 80 per cent of market rents.

⁹ [Social Housing Update: Written Statement – HCWS614, 29 March 2018](#)

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ MHCLG, [Use of receipts from Right to Buy sales](#), August 2018, para 1

¹² LGA, [£3.5 billion right-to-Buy discounts threatens scheme](#), 2 February 2018

¹³ [CIH Press Release](#), 28 June 2018

But CIH said its projection of future losses is lower than in previous years because the government has made several positive announcements in recent months, including more funding for housing associations, lifting the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap for local authorities and abandoning plans to force councils to sell their most valuable empty homes.

Figures from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England show that 117,828 local authority homes and 47,869 housing association homes for social rent were lost between 2012 and 2018. Despite some continued new build for social rent, numbers have continued to fall – because of right to buy sales and properties being converted to ‘affordable rent’ or demolished.

Based on current trends, CIH is projecting that 199,000 homes for social rent will have been lost between 2012 and 2020 – 140,828 council homes and 57,869 housing association homes. Those figures include the loss of an estimated 3,000 homes due to the West Midlands pilot of the extension of right to buy to housing associations.

Chief executive Terrie Alafat CBE said: “For many people on lower incomes, the only truly affordable option is social rent. It is simply unacceptable that we are losing so many of our most affordable homes at a time when more and more people are in need.

“We need to increase the number of homes we are building but it’s not just a numbers game – we need to make sure we are building the right homes, in the right places, at the right prices.”

She added: “We have seen some welcome progress in recent months, including the removal of the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap to help councils build more homes and the new investment partnerships between housing associations and Homes England.

“But government investment is still heavily skewed towards the private market. Our analysis shows that 79 per cent of the housing budget up to 2020/21 is directed towards private housing, with just 21 per cent going to affordable housing. Rebalancing this budget could make a big difference - it is vital that the government supports councils and housing associations to build more homes for social rent.”

CIH is also calling on the government to suspend the right to buy, which is the biggest factor in the continued fall in homes for social rent.

Terrie Alafat said: “Not only are we failing to build enough homes for social rent – right to buy means we are losing them at a time when millions of people need genuinely affordable housing more than ever.

“We support the principle of helping tenants move into home ownership if that’s what they want, but it cannot be at the expense of other people in need. The government should suspend right to buy to stem the loss of social rented homes, remove the barriers stopping councils from replacing homes sold and look at more effective ways to help people access home ownership.¹⁴

Suspending the RTB also formed one of the recommendations of the CIH’s report, [Rethinking Social Housing](#) (June 2018).

¹⁴ [CIH Press Release](#), 6 February 2019

A voluntary RTB for housing association tenants

The 2015 Government committed to extend the Right to Buy to assured tenants of housing associations on a voluntary basis. No implementation date for full roll-out has been announced. A large regional pilot scheme in the Midlands was launched on 16 August 2018. The pilot builds on a small-scale pilot with five housing associations conducted in 2016/17 and is testing two key aspects of the voluntary agreement with housing associations not tested in the initial pilot – the portable discount and one-for-one replacement overall of the homes sold. The Government has said that the impact of the pilot scheme will be assessed before decisions are made on the next steps.

The House of Commons Library briefing paper [Introducing a voluntary Right to Buy for housing association tenants in England](#) (CBP-7224) provides background on the policy and explains progress to date.

1.2 Social housing rent setting

On 8 July 2015 ([Summer Budget 2015](#)) the Chancellor announced that rents in social housing would be reduced by 1% a year for four years resulting in a 12% reduction in average rents by 2020-21. The measure was forecast to save £1.4 billion by 2020-21, primarily in reduced Housing Benefit expenditure. Around 1.2m tenants not in receipt of Housing Benefit in the social rented sector were expected to benefit by £700 per year (2015 prices).

This policy change was unexpected and was greeted with some dismay by social landlords who had to model the impact on their business plans. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) predicted an overall reduction in housing investment as a result of the rent reduction policy.¹⁵

The Housing White Paper, [Fixing our broken housing market](#) (February 2017), included a commitment to develop a rent policy for social landlords beyond 2020.

On 4 October 2017, MHCLG [announced](#) that “increases to social housing rents will be limited to CPI plus 1% for 5 years from 2020.”¹⁶ This return to inflation-linked rent setting has been welcomed within the sector.

The House of Commons Library briefing paper [Rent setting: social housing \(England\)](#) (SN01090) provides further information.

The [2019 UK Housing Review](#) (chapter 2) comments on the balance between funding new investment and tenant services through rent payments:

There is a balance to be struck between rents funding new investment as well as tenant services, while ensuring their

¹⁵ OBR, [Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#), Cm 9088, July 2015, para 3.84

¹⁶ [£2 billion boost for affordable housing and long term deal for social rent](#), MHCLG News Release, 4 October 2017

affordability to households on low incomes and mitigating their impact on benefits. At the moment, this balance seems badly skewed. Developing a comprehensive strategy to deliver the right housing at the right costs therefore inevitably requires policies on rents and the benefit system to form part of the big picture.

1.3 The Government's Social Housing Green Paper

The Government published its Social Housing Green Paper – [A new deal for social housing](#) – on 14 August 2018.¹⁷ The consultation closed on 6 November 2018, and **the Government is currently analysing consultation responses**. The Green Paper sought views on the Government's vision for a new, fairer deal for social housing residents around five core themes:

- Ensuring homes are safe and decent.
- Effective resolution of complaints.
- Empowering residents and strengthening the Regulator.
- Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities.
- Expanding supply and supporting home ownership.¹⁸

In a [Written Statement on 4 September 2018](#) the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, James Brokenshire, summarised the Government's key social housing proposals as follows:

...Everyone deserves a decent, affordable and secure place to live. It's the most fundamental of human needs. While we have made important strides to build the homes we need in recent years, I recognise we have much further to go when it comes to making our housing market work for all parts of our society – not least for residents in social housing. Our Green Paper is an important step towards this.

It is based on conversations with almost 1,000 residents at 14 events across the country, with over 7,000 submitting their views and ideas online. We have heard what people love about social housing – stories of people's pride in their homes and communities. But we also heard what needs to change. The Green Paper is underpinned by five principles:

1. Ensuring that homes are safe and decent. Residents were not only concerned about safety, but also the quality and maintenance of their homes. The Government has identified opportunities to accelerate a social sector early response to recommendations in Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety by supporting residents and landlords to engage on issues of building safety. The Green Paper will also consider whether the Decent Homes Standard is demanding enough and delivers the right outcomes.

2. Swift and effective resolution of disputes. Residents raised issues about how complaints were dealt with when things go

¹⁷ MHCLG, [A new deal for social housing](#), CM 9671, 14 August 2018

¹⁸ ['Social housing green paper: a 'new deal' for social housing'](#), MHCLG News Release, 14 August 2018

wrong. We want to make the process of handling and resolving complaints faster, easier and more effective. As part of this, the Green Paper asks whether the 'democratic filter' should be reformed or removed. In addition, we 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. We want to ensure residents are empowered, with more transparency about the information they receive from landlords. The Green Paper contains proposals to assess landlords against standards that matter to residents, to publish these assessments, and to strengthen the regulatory framework for social housing. We want to make sure the regulatory framework as a whole remains fit for purpose and published a Call for Evidence which seeks views on how the current regulatory framework is working, alongside the Green Paper. We are also seeking views on how to ensure residents' voices are heard and strengthening their choice over the services they receive.

4. Elimination of stigma. 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 amongst housing management staff 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. Boosting the supply of social housing and supporting home ownership. Residents told us that they wanted to see more affordable homes delivered. We published the Right to Buy Receipts Consultation which sets out our proposals for exploring new flexibilities around how local authorities can use their Right to Buy receipts. 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.

After listening carefully to social housing residents, we are proposing not to implement the provisions in the Housing and Planning Act to make fixed term tenancies mandatory for local authority tenants at this time.

We recognise the benefits of fixed term tenancies in the right circumstances to help social landlords make best use of their housing stock and that flexibility will remain. But we remain keen to ensure that victims of domestic abuse do not risk losing their lifetime tenancy if they are granted a new tenancy after fleeing abuse. We will bring forward new legislation to ensure that councils honour their lifetime tenancy in these cases...

Sector commentary

The **Local Government Association** (LGA) welcomed the Green Paper as an "opportunity to set a new direction for the critical role that social housing will play in a future economy and society that is fair, happy and productive".¹⁹

¹⁹ LGA, [LGA Response to 'A new deal for social housing' Green Paper](#), October 2018

Nevertheless, the [LGA's response to the Green Paper](#) called for further reforms, including:

- the right for councils to reinvest 100 per cent of Right to Buy (RtB) receipts into new homes, and to have local discretion on setting RtB discounts.
- measures to increase the supply of good quality social housing through the planning system.
- action to address welfare reforms which have caused concern for tenants.
- a stable long-term financial framework to enable councils to plan investments into making homes safe and decent.

The LGA also expressed concern that a national performance regime could generate perverse incentives leading to unforeseen consequences.

The **National Housing Federation** (NHF) similarly welcomed the Green Paper, whilst calling for additional funding and wider reforms:

...We know that social housing residents like the quality of their homes, they're concerned about the shortage of genuinely affordable homes and they feel that recent welfare reforms have caused real hardship. There must be space within the Green Paper consultation to address these wider concerns.

We also know that many tenants believe the quality of services from their landlord could be improved. We know people want to feel listened to and influence the kind of services they receive. We have been leading a national conversation with our members and tenant organisations to understand where and how we can do better. Housing associations are committed to putting the people we serve at the heart of everything we do. We want to ensure this is the reality in all our homes and communities across the country.

Without significant new investment in the building of more social housing, it is very hard to see how it can be a safety net and springboard for all the people who desperately need it. Our ambition for the Green Paper is that it sets a course for a future where everyone can access a quality home they can afford. To do that we need to build 90,000 new social rent homes every year.²⁰

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, **the charity Shelter set up a commission on the future of social housing**. The commission, consisting of independent commissioners from across the political spectrum and a diverse range of backgrounds, consulted extensively with individuals and organisations. The final report, [Building for our future: A vision for social housing](#) (January 2019), made a number of recommendations for reform in addition to calling for a historic renewal of social housing (referred to in section 1.1), including:

- A new regulator working across social and private renting to protect residents, and to set and enforce common standards.
- A new national tenants' organisation, or union, to give social housing residents a voice at a regional and national level.

²⁰ NHF, [National Housing Federation response to the Social Housing Green Paper](#), 14 August 2018

- Replacement of any social housing sold in future, ensuring that these homes are a national asset for generations to come.
- Delivery of social housing as part of mixed communities that do not visibly distinguish social homes from others in the same development, avoiding design which excludes or stigmatises.²¹

1.4 The Labour Party's housing green paper

On 19 April 2018, the Labour Party launched a green paper – [Housing for the Many](#) – outlining the Party's plans to “get more than 100,000 new genuinely affordable homes built each year – a level not recorded since 1978”.²²

Labour's Shadow Housing Secretary, John Healey, commented:

The housing market is broken and current Conservative housing policy is failing to fix it. We have to build more affordable homes to make homes more affordable. The Conservatives won't do this, so the next Labour government must, by hardwiring Labour's new affordable housing throughout the system, from housebuilding targets to investment priorities to planning rules. This Green Paper sets out our plan to change the country's approach to affordable housing as part of a new national mission to solve the country's housing crisis.²³

The green paper seeks views on proposals to:

- Introduce a new definition of ‘affordable housing’ linked to local income.
- Suspend the Right to Buy and end all conversions to ‘affordable rent’.
- Give councils and housing associations new funding, powers and flexibilities to enable them to build at scale.
- Transform the planning system with: a new duty to deliver affordable homes; an English Sovereign Land Trust to make more land available more cheaply; and removal of the development ‘viability loophole’.²⁴

To deal with issues raised by the fire at Grenfell Tower, the green paper also proposes:

- A new ‘Decent Homes 2’ programme, to include fire safety.
- New rights for affordable housing residents, including tenants on boards, consumer rights standards and a vote on estate regeneration schemes.
- New leading-edge standards on energy efficiency, design and smart technology for affordable homes.

²¹ Shelter, [Building for our future: A vision for social housing - The final report of Shelter's commission on the future of social housing](#),

²² The Labour Party, [Housing for the Many: A Labour Party Green Paper](#), 19 April 2018, p2

²³ ‘[Housing for the Many: A Labour Party Green Paper](#)’, *NAEA News*, 19 April 2018

²⁴ The Labour Party, [Housing for the Many: A Labour Party Green Paper](#), 19 April 2018, p3

- Greater security for families and stability for communities by removing the Government's legislation to end long-term council tenancies.²⁵

1.5 Review of social housing regulation

The Social Housing Green Paper announced the Government's intention to carry out a review of the regulatory framework for social housing, with three key objectives:

- a. to rebalance the relationship between social housing landlords and residents, setting out the level of service residents should expect and clarifying how they can hold their landlord to account when they are not delivering;
- b. to ensure private registered providers of social housing are well governed and financially viable – reflecting the changing business models and levels of risk in the sector; and
- c. to make sure the Regulator of Social Housing ("the Regulator") has effective powers to deliver the first two objectives and that there are clear lines of accountability between the Regulator and Parliament.²⁶

Alongside the Social Housing Green Paper, the Government published a [Call for Evidence](#) which sought views on how the regulatory regime is meeting its current objectives – both what works well and what does not. The call for evidence is intended to inform the review of social housing regulation; and "marks the start of a process of on-going engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, that will include technical workshops, a working group and sounding board".²⁷

The call for evidence closed on 6 November 2018, and **the Government is currently analysing responses.**

1.6 Strengthening consumer redress in housing

The Government consulted, between 18 February and 16 April 2018, on [strengthening consumer redress in the housing market](#). This process sought views on better ways for consumers across the private-rented, leasehold, social-housing and owner-occupied sector to resolve their complaints.²⁸

The [Government's response](#), published on 24 January 2019, sets out proposals for a programme of reform to strengthen redress for housing consumers, including the establishment of a new housing complaints resolution service - a single access portal through which consumers will be able to seek help to resolve complaints and access redress when they

²⁵ Ibid., pp3-4

²⁶ MHCLG, [Review of social housing regulation: call for evidence](#), 14 August 2018, p6

²⁷ Ibid., p7

²⁸ MHCLG, [Strengthening consumer redress in the housing market: a consultation](#), 18 February 2018

have been unable to resolve disputes with their landlord, property agent or developer.

In an accompanying [Written Statement](#) the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, James Brokenshire, explained how the resolution service will be developed:

I intend to work closely with ombudsmen and redress schemes to deliver this in partnership. My ambition is for this service to be available for social housing residents, private renters, leaseholders and buyers of new build homes. People must be confident in their options when things go wrong with their homes, and we will commit to raising consumer awareness of how to resolve complaints once the new service is operational.

We will establish a redress reform working group with ombudsmen and redress schemes to help drive the programme of reform, including the establishment of the resolution service. We want to work with this group to undertake a comprehensive audit of existing standards for handling complaints and explore how they could be improved through existing and new voluntary guidance on a sector by sector basis which, where appropriate, will be underpinned through legislation or regulation.

It is my ambition that this will develop into a comprehensive code of practice on complaint handling for the whole housing sector. Through this we can ensure that there are clear expectations for accessibility, transparency, timeliness and sanctions in terms of handling complaints. Work to improve complaints handling in the social housing sector will initially be carried forward separately, given our commitments in the social housing Green Paper to address the specific issues facing social housing residents.²⁹

1.7 Scotland

Scotland launched [Housing Beyond 2021 discussion paper](#) in September 2018. This is a broad discussion on the future of housing – there is an aim to publish a route map in spring 2020.

Information on social housing policy ‘actions’ in Scotland can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#). Scotland abolished the Right to Buy on 31 July 2016.

The UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence published a short overview of [social rented housing in Scotland](#) since devolution in November 2018.³⁰

1.8 Wales

Background on social housing in Wales can be found in a report published by the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence [Social housing in Wales](#) (October 2018).³¹

²⁹ [HCWS1272 24 January 2019](#)

³⁰ Dr Bilge Serin, Professor Kenneth Gibb, Professor Keith Kintrea, [Social housing in Scotland](#), November 2018

³¹ Dr Bob Smith, [Social housing in Wales](#), October 2018

The Welsh Government commissioned an independent panel to carry out a review of affordable housing supply policy. The final report was published on 1 May 2019:

[Independent review of affordable housing supply: report](#)

The report recommends “a new approach to grant funding, improvements to housing quality standards, a 5 year rent policy and new affordable homes to be near zero carbon.”

The Right to Buy was abolished in Wales with effect from 26 January 2019.

1.9 Northern Ireland

The Chartered Institute of Housing in Northern Ireland, working with the Department for Communities, published [Rethinking Social Housing Northern Ireland](#) in November 2018. This report reviews the role of social housing and calls for, amongst other things, the end of the equivalent to the Right to Buy in Northern Ireland.

The UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence published [Social housing in Northern Ireland: challenges and policy options](#) in October 2018.³²

³² Joe Frey, [Social housing in Northern Ireland: challenges and policy options](#), October 2018

2. News

[Grenfell group attacks lack of progress before second anniversary](#), Guardian, 10 June 2019

[Social housing residents 'second-class citizens' over home repairs](#), Sky News, 10 June 2019

[Five million households in England struggling to afford housing costs, study finds](#), Independent, 6 June 2019

[High rents are stopping young people moving away from small towns for better-paid work, report finds](#), Independent, 6 June 2019

[Government warned of another Grenfell-type disaster as 60,000 people still living in buildings covered in same flammable material](#), Independent, 6 June 2019

[Will private capital solve the social housing crisis?](#), Telegraph, 20 May 2019

[Now scarce social housing is being flogged off at auction by councils desperate to stay afloat](#), Independent, 17 May 2019

[Homeless people in UK 'denied social housing as risky tenants'](#), Guardian, 15 May 2019

[Too poor to play: children in social housing blocked from communal playground](#), Guardian, 25 March 2019

[Overcrowding in social housing in England soars to 24-year high](#), Guardian, 31 January 2019

[Yes, let's build more social housing – and show that we've learned the lessons of the Grenfell tragedy](#), Independent, 8 January 2019

[England needs 3m new social homes by 2040, says cross-party report](#), Guardian, 7 January 2019

[UK social housing deal with private equity giant sparks fears for tenants](#), Reuters, 4 January 2019

[Grenfell families seek radical reform of social housing oversight](#), Guardian, 3 January 2019

[Only 20% of landlords would consider letting property to young people who have been homeless](#), Independent, 14 December 2018

[What's happening to rented social housing in England?](#), Full Fact, 18 December 2018

[Mitie to sell social housing arm to focus on core businesses](#), Financial Times, 19 November 2018

[Rule changes 'risk new social housing black hole' in England](#), Guardian, 13 November 2018

['After Grenfell, London needs a tenants czar'](#), Evening Standard, 12 November 2018

[Government's new council house building drive will come at expense of housing associations](#), Independent, 2 November 2018

[Housing associations praise May's £2bn plan as 'total step change'](#), Guardian, 19 September 2018

3. Parliamentary Material

3.1 Written Material

[Affordable Housing: Construction](#) HC, PQ 257818, 5 June 2019

Asked by: Amesbury, Mike | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress his Department has made on ensuring that former (a) MoD and (b) other suitable land is developed to provide affordable social housing in areas of need.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

By the end of March 2018, over 40,000 homes had been brought to market on former central government land, of which over 11,500 homes are on former MoD sites.

Land released via the Public Land for Housing Programme is subject to the requirements of Affordable Housing policies of each Local Planning Authority (LPA).

[High Rise Flats: Birmingham](#), HC, PQ 254115, 22 May 2019

Asked by: Godsiff, Mr Roger | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many (a) private tower blocks and (b) social housing blocks in Birmingham have been identified as requiring the removal and replacement of unsafe aluminium composite cladding.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

As of 30 April, Birmingham has between 1 and 5 private sector high-rise buildings identified with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding systems unlikely to meet Building Regulations which are yet to be remediated. This data is published in the [April 2019 Building Safety Programme Data Release](#).

There has been no funding allocated to Birmingham City Council as we are not aware of any social sector high-rise buildings with ACM cladding in Birmingham.

[Social Rented Housing: Mental Illness](#), HC, PQ 253692, 21 May 2019

Asked by: Thomas, Derek | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the number of people with mental health problems on social housing waiting lists.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Local authorities are required by law to ensure that 'reasonable preference' (ie priority) for social housing is given to those who need to move on medical and welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability. Statutory allocations guidance makes clear that this would include a mental illness or disorder.

[Ministry of Defence: Land](#), HL15686, 20 May 2019

Asked by: Lord Porter of Spalding | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps are being taken, if any, to make surplus Ministry of Defence land available to local authorities for the provision of affordable and social housing.

Answering member: Earl Howe | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Ministry of Defence

The Government ensures that local authorities have the opportunity to express an interest in surplus Ministry of Defence land.

In accordance with Her Majesty's Treasury guidelines, once a site is declared surplus to Defence purposes it is placed on the cross-Government database managed by the Office of Government Property within the Cabinet Office. This database provides an opportunity for other public bodies including local authorities to express an interest in acquiring sites before they are placed on the open market. Sites stay on the data base for 40 working days.

Treasury guidelines state that transactions such as sales between Departments should generally be at full market value even if transferred to other public sector bodies (including publicly sponsored housing associations).

[High Rise Flats: Insulation](#), HC, PQ 254265, 20 May 2019

Asked by: Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will put in place a deadline by which ACM cladding will have been removed from (a) private and (b) social housing blocks.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

On 9 May, Government announced its commitment to fully fund the remediation of private sector high-rise residential blocks (above 18 metres) with unsafe Aluminium Composite Material cladding, except where a warranty claim has been accepted. This will allow remediation to happen quickly. We continue to put pressure on building owners and developers to make their buildings permanently safe as swiftly as possible.

We are not expecting any further applications from social sector building owners but we will still accept applications from any building owners who require funding.

Social Rented Housing, HL15509, 15 May 2019

Asked by: Lord Kennedy of Southwark | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many social rented council houses have been converted to "Affordable Rent" in England since 2015; whether there has been a subsequent reduction in the housing stock of local authorities; and if so, what was that reduction.

Answering member: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The department does not hold data on tenure type changes, including conversions from social rent to affordable rent.

The Regulator of Social Housing publishes information on the number of conversions of social rent to affordable rent for properties owned by Private Registered Providers only through their Statistical Data Return, which is (attached) available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistical-data-return-statistical-releases> Information on the stock of social and affordable rent owned by local authorities is available in section A of the Local Authority Housing statistics data, which can be (attached) found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>

Social Rented Housing: Disability, HC, PQ 250003, 13 May 2019

Asked by: Cameron, Dr Lisa | **Party:** Scottish National Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that wheelchair-users do not have to wait longer than non-wheelchair users for social homes.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The statutory 'reasonable preference' criteria already ensure that social housing is prioritised for those who need to move on medical and welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability. This will include wheel-chair users.

In the Social Housing Green Paper we set out our intention to undertake an evidence collection exercise to help us understand how the allocations system is working and whether it is striking the right balance between fairness, support and aspiration. We are considering responses to the Green Paper and will respond in due course.

Clarion Housing Group, HC, PQ 249190, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Fitzpatrick, Jim | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2018 to Question 193589, on complaints about Clarion Housing Group, whether the Regulator of Social Housing is monitoring all complaints received and dealt with by that housing association or

only those made to the Housing Ombudsman and directly to the regulator.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The Regulator of Social Housing continues to monitor the level of complaints and referrals from Clarion tenants made to the Regulator and to take any follow up engagement as appropriate. The Regulator also liaises closely with the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman will notify the Regulator if they receive any complaints that present evidence of potential systemic issues relating to any registered providers.

[Regulator of Social Housing](#), HC, PQ 249189, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Fitzpatrick, Jim | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether, in the forthcoming social housing Green Paper, he will revise the definition of the serious detriment test used to determine compliance with the Homes Standard by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The Social Housing Green Paper announced that the Government would conduct a review of social housing regulation, looking at how it can support a new, fairer deal for social housing residents. The green paper said that "we want to ensure the serious detriment bar does not prevent the Regulator from taking a more proactive approach, and if it does, then we will consider removing it." The Government will publish its response to the Green Paper in due course.

[Regulator of Social Housing: Public Appointments](#), HC, PQ 249188, 09 May 2019

Asked by: Fitzpatrick, Jim | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, where the post of Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing was advertised.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Along with all other public appointments, the role of Chair of the Regulator of the Social Housing was advertised on the Cabinet Office's Government Public Appointment website. The post was also advertised on websites associated with the appointment of non-executive directors – specifically the Public Chairs Forum, NEDonBoard, Women on Boards and ConnectOnBoard – as well as the website of the Tenants and Residents of England Trust. The department, the Regulator of Social Housing and the Cabinet Office all published links to the advert on the Government Public Appointment website on their social media.

[Regulator of Social Housing: Public Appointments](#), HC, PQ 249187, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Fitzpatrick, Jim | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which consultancies were involved in the recruitment of the new Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing; and how were those companies chosen to undertake that work.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

No consultancies were involved in the recruitment of the new Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing.

[Regulator of Social Housing: Public Appointments](#), HC, PQ 249186, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Fitzpatrick, Jim | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reason the recruitment panel for the new Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing did not include a tenant of social housing.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The membership of the Assessment Panel advising the Minister for Housing on appointable candidates met the requirements of the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments and included a senior departmental official and an independent member. The Governance Code does not require Panels to include a representative of the sector to which the public body relates.

[Regulator of Social Housing: Public Appointments](#), HC, PQ 249185, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Fitzpatrick, Jim | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 November 2018 to Question 192956, how many applicants were interviewed for the post of Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing; and how many of those applicants were social housing tenants.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Three applicants have been interviewed for the post of Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing. Applicants were not asked as part of the application or interview process to confirm whether they were currently, or had ever been, social housing tenants.

[Housing Associations](#), HC, PQ 247566, 30 April 2019

Asked by: Timms, Stephen | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to encourage Housing Associations to retain essential household items within properties during a change of tenancy.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

In England, the Regulator of Social Housing requires registered providers to maintain their homes to the Decent Homes Standard. That includes a requirement to provide reasonably modern facilities and services. The Standard does not require social landlords to provide essential household items such as households goods or furnishings.

Where people need it, the Government provides a strong safety net through the welfare system for those who need extra support, including a system of hardship payments and benefit advances. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) may also be able to offer support for those that need help with the costs of intermittent expenses that are considered difficult to budget for, including furniture. For those on Universal Credit, budgeting advances provide access to interest free payments for one-off items. For those on other DWP means-tested benefits interest free budgeting loans are available.

3.2 Oral Material

[Grenfell Tower Fire](#), HC deb, 661 cc331-2, 6 June 2019

The issue of retrospection is obviously a difficult one from a regulatory point of view. One of the things that we have said is that all building owners have a duty to ensure that the buildings that they own are safe. If that means that they have to take remedial action retrospectively to comply, to make it safe, then they should do so. The question of liability, as the hon. Gentleman knows, is also a difficult one. Nevertheless, in the light of the reformed building regulations, it will be for building owners to review whether the buildings that they are maintaining and owning are safe and to take appropriate action.

As I said, we have accepted all 53 of Dame Judith Hackitt's recommendations and we will be going further. Indeed, we may well go further in scope in the light of the issues that are brought forward.

The final matter raised by a number of Members, particularly the hon. Member for Westminster North (Ms Buck), was the issue of the residents' voice, the social housing Green Paper and, indeed, the place of social housing in our society. One of the most important legacies of Grenfell must be the rebalancing of the relationship between residents in social housing and their landlords. After the tragedy, we spoke to almost 1,000 people, including the bereaved and survivors of Grenfell Tower. It came through in those conversations, time after time, that residents feel excluded from the discussion about their homes; they feel that

their voices are not being heard. I reject the idea that people in social housing can expect only a second-class system. This has been and is fundamentally wrong. Last August, we published our Green Paper, “A new deal for social housing”, and our response and action plan will be published in due course. I have given commitments in the various meetings that I have had around the country that there will be change on that too.

Nothing can undo the pain and devastation caused by the fire at Grenfell Tower. We remain determined to do right by the victims and survivors of the tragedy, and to provide a legacy of real change for them—to deliver fundamental reform, to end the stigma attached to social housing and to honour the memories of those who lost their lives. I thank everybody who has participated in the debate, and share the determination across the House to ensure that nothing like Grenfell can ever happen again.

[Housing: Social Rent](#), HL deb, 798 c4, 4 June 2019

Asked by: Baroness Thornhill (LD) | **Party:** Liberal Democrats

My Lords, does the Minister agree that the Government’s own social rent policy is a key component in creating a sustainable funding model for building social housing? As this policy is due for review in 2021, will the Government take this opportunity to provide renters, housing providers and investors, including councils, with some clarity, predictability and stability in this market, which at the moment they do not feel they have?

Answered by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, I am a little surprised that the noble Baroness said that. As I indicated, we removed the HRA borrowing cap, which was a substantial barrier to provision of housing at social rent, as was acknowledged across the board. It has been widely welcomed, not least by her own party, and will make a real difference. I am not sure what additional clarity she is referring to, but I am happy to meet her separately if it is helpful.

[Housing: Social Rent](#), HL deb, 798 c4, 4 June 2019

Asked by: Baroness Browning (Con) | **Party:** Conservative Party

Does my noble friend envisage that the solution to the need for social housing would be met by nationalising all available building land throughout the country, including presumably land owned by charitable trusts, Church Commissioners and others?

Answered by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, I think my noble friend is referring to the policy initiative of the leader of the Opposition, and I tend to agree that that will not help solve the problem. We are intent on getting the balance right and ensuring that, in tenancies, there are the right measures to deal with disreputable landlords. However, the compulsory purchase of people’s property is not the way forward.

[Housing: Social Rent](#), HL deb, 798 c3, 4 June 2019

Asked by: Baroness Blackstone (Ind Lab) | **Party:** Labour Independent Party

My Lords, I am sure the Minister is aware that, in recent years, local authorities have spent over £1 billion on temporary accommodation over three or four years. He talked about getting the balance right; surely this is not getting the balance right. That amount of money is going on accommodation which will not last, and children in those families will suffer hugely: their education and home life will be damaged. This is a matter of real urgency. The Government's programme is not sufficient in the funding being made available to local authorities and housing associations to solve the problem of social housing.

Answered by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, I have already acknowledged that it is important to deal with this issue. I am sure the noble Baroness is aware that the Homelessness Reduction Act has resulted in a lowering of the number of people who are homeless. It is difficult to make the comparison with the statistics, but the evidence tends to suggest that. Yes, there is work to be done, not least on the provision of homes at social rent. As I have indicated, that is something we are determined to do.

[Housing: Social Rent](#), HL deb, 798 c1, 4 June 2019

Asked by: Lord Best (CB) | **Party:** Crossbench

My Lords, the Affordable Housing Commission, which I have the honour of chairing, has been looking at issues around affordability. Our evidence clearly demonstrates that rents, not just in the private sector but increasingly in the social sector, are leading people into all kinds of serious difficulties, such as debt, arrears, personal problems and indeed homelessness.

Does the Minister agree—with the CSJ, the housing commission, Shelter and so many others—that we need more social housing but at genuinely affordable rents, which are less than the rents that housing associations are required to charge today, otherwise this will cost the Government greatly in housing benefit, homelessness, temporary accommodation and, indeed, the misery of the people affected?

Answered by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, as always, the noble Lord makes a powerful point and speaks from great experience. He is right that the current welfare budget, excluding pensions, is £119 billion per annum—a large amount. We have to be conscious of the link between housing and welfare, so I take the point. However, I am sure he will appreciate that the affordability measure enables us to provide more housing. It is about getting that balance right.

[Housing: Social Rent](#), HL deb, 798 c1, 4 June 2019

Asked by: Lord Shipley | **Party:** Liberal Democrats

I thank the Minister for his reply. He will be aware that there is a difference between affordable and social housing. He will also be aware that this year marks the centenary of the housing Act 1919, which created council and social housing. Given the scale of homelessness today, and given that waiting lists for social housing stand at over a million households, does the Minister accept that a new generation of social housing is required, rather than just a few thousand new homes a year?

Answered by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, I certainly agree with the noble Lord that there is a challenge. We have just had the best year of housing delivery for 30 years, bar one year, but that is not to be complacent. There is certainly a challenge; I accept that we need to build more social homes. The raising of the £2 billion budget will certainly help in that regard, as will the elimination of the HRA borrowing caps.

[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 cc68-1298, 09 May 2019

Asked by: Baroness Kennedy of Cradley | **Party:** Labour Party

Tabled by

Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the provision of suitable social housing for older people.

Answered by: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office (Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth) (Con) | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, I congratulate the noble Lord on so ably stepping into the breach. The Government have made £9 billion available through the affordable homes programme to March 2022 to deliver new affordable homes of a range of tenures, including social rent and supported housing. Supported housing, including sheltered housing, plays a vital role in the lives of the most vulnerable, including older people. Since 2011, we have delivered 34,000 units of specialist and other supported housing for disabled, vulnerable and older people.

[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 c1298, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Lord Howell of Guildford (Con) | **Party:** Conservative Party

Is my noble friend aware that 7,000 high-quality new homes are being built per day in the Republic of India—which, admittedly, is larger than us and probably quite soon will be richer than us as well? Would he concede that new construction technology has a major part to play in adequate and swift provision of social housing for all ages?

Answering member: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, I was unaware of that statistic, but certainly India is developing incredibly quickly on a number of technological fronts, so I am not totally surprised. My noble friend is absolutely right about the importance of ensuring that housing delivery is carbon neutral and that modern methods of construction enable us to move very quickly. We are doing so across a range of areas. Last week, I saw modern methods of construction providing help for the homeless. It is pleasing to see that beginning to happen across all sectors; it cannot happen too quickly.

[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 c1298, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Lord Howell of Guildford (Con) | **Party:** Conservative Party

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[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 c70, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Baroness Boycott (CB) | **Party:** Crossbench

My Lords, while everyone would welcome a housebuilding programme, can the Minister assure the House that all these new houses will be built to be as carbon neutral as possible, given the current state of the climate emergency?

Answering member: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, the climate change dimension is of interest to me, and the noble Baroness is right to highlight it. Modern methods of construction in particular will help us to deliver on that. Many companies are developing modern methods of construction and housing which are carbon neutral, and receive funding through BEIS to help with that programme.

[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 c69, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Baroness Boycott (CB) | **Party:** Crossbench

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houses will be built to be as carbon neutral as possible, given the current state of the climate emergency?

Answered by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

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[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 c69, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Baroness Andrews (Lab) | **Party:** Labour Party

Is the Minister aware of the All-Party Group on Housing and Care for Older People, very ably chaired by the noble Lord, Lord Best, who cannot be in his place this morning? Is he also aware that in the next 20 years, by 2041, about 30% of older people will be in the private rented sector? This will be Generation Rent, who will not be able to afford to pay rent when they retire. What plans do his Government—and his department in particular—have to deal with that? We need to plan for that crisis now.

Answered by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, the noble Baroness is right: the private rented sector has grown massively across all age groups. There is nothing inherently wrong in that; it was slightly implicit in the question that it was undesirable. Oh, she shakes her head—I misunderstood. There are particular concerns. As she will know, we have moved on a number of factors in relation to the private rented sector across the board to ensure fairness on rents, evictions, secure tenancies, tenant fees and so on. She is right to highlight this. I assure her that we will carry things forward.

[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 c1297, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Baroness Greengross (CB) | **Party:** Crossbench

My Lords, I recently served on the ad hoc Select Committee on intergenerational fairness. It published its report two weeks ago. Although I know that the Government have not yet responded formally to the committee's recommendations, the Minister will be aware of those we made on housing, many of which might help to increase the housing supply, especially of social housing. For instance, there is the presumption that local authorities be given priority to develop for housing any publicly owned land in their area, and the specific recommendation that retirement communities that provide extra care be designated as class C2—the same as care homes—to encourage their development. That issue is very close to the heart of the Associated Retirement Community Operators, ARCO, with which I work and for which I am proud to be patron. Will these recommendations be acted on, and quickly? They are very important.

Answering member: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness for what she does on behalf of older people, specifically on intergenerational fairness. I remember the work we did together on the Neighbourhood Planning Act to ensure that, for the first time ever, older people are recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework. She is absolutely right about the importance of this. In fact, pensioners as a class have never been better off than they are the moment, but there are specific needs relating to housing. I mentioned Part M and the importance of delivering more specific homes. We are carrying that forward.

[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 c69, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Baroness Greengross (CB) | **Party:** Crossbench

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Answered by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness for what she does on behalf of older people, specifically on intergenerational fairness. I remember the work we did together on the Neighbourhood Planning Act to ensure that, for the first time ever, older people are recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework. She is absolutely right about the importance of this. In fact, pensioners as a class have never been better off than they are the moment, but there are specific needs relating to housing. I mentioned Part M and the importance of delivering more specific homes. We are carrying that forward.

[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 c68, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Lord Shipley (LD) | **Party:** Liberal Democrats

My Lords, in February last year—15 months ago—the Communities and Local Government Select Committee reported on its inquiry into housing for older people. It had 41 recommendations. Eight months ago, in September 2018, the Government's response was published. It left many questions unanswered, but it did say this:

"We have been clear that we will consider housing as we develop proposals for the future of the social care system in the green paper to be published in the autumn".

The two areas of social care and housing are clearly linked. The Green Paper was not published and there is no sign of it. Does the

Minister accept the need to respond properly to the committee's recommendations, and that the failure to publish the Green Paper is turning into a major failure of public policy?

Answering member: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, the noble Lord is right about the importance of the Select Committee's recommendations, many of which we are taking forward. He will know that we have ensured that approximately 22,000 specific homes since 2011 have been geared towards older people. We have committed £400 million in the spending review to delivering specialist affordable homes for the vulnerable, elderly and those with disability. We are bringing the Green Paper forward, but he is absolutely right that it is important.

[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 c68, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Lord Kennedy of Southwark | **Party:** Labour Party

My Lords, what plans do the Government have to support calls for the lifetime homes standard to be mandatory for at least some, if not all, social housing built in future? That would enable people to stay in their homes longer, help them to remain independent and save money on future aids and adaptations.

Answered by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, the noble Lord is right to concentrate on that standard. He will know that Part M of the building regulations is about to be reviewed; we have touched on it previously. We very much hope that will be tightened for its requirements for disabled and older people. That will help to inform the sort of progress that we are all keen to make.

[Social Housing: Older People](#), HL deb, 797 c1296, 9 May 2019

Asked by: Baroness Kennedy of Cradley | **Party:** Labour Party

Tabled by

Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the provision of suitable social housing for older people.

Answering member: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office (Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth) (Con) | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, I congratulate the noble Lord on so ably stepping into the breach. The Government have made £9 billion available through the affordable homes programme to March 2022 to deliver new affordable homes of a range of tenures, including social rent and supported housing. Supported housing, including sheltered housing, plays a vital role in the lives of the most vulnerable, including older people. Since 2011, we have delivered 34,000 units of specialist and other supported housing for disabled, vulnerable and older people.

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