

## 1. To be safe in your home

### The Government's Commitments. "We Will..."

Legislate to strengthen the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer regulation objectives to explicitly include safety

Legislate to require social landlords to identify a nominated person responsible for complying with their health and safety requirements.

Expect the Regulator of Social Housing to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding with the Health and Safety Executive to ensure effective sharing of information with the Building Safety Regulator.

Launch a consultation on requiring smoke alarms in social housing and introducing new expectations for carbon monoxide alarms.

Consult on measures to ensure that social housing residents are protected from harm caused by poor electrical safety.

Continue to work with the Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group and the Building Safety Regulator to ensure resident voices are heard.

### Landlord Services' view on what Housing is doing well:

- We have good links with the fire service
- The Fire Service has agreed to undertake communal checks and tenant checks
- The Fire Service come to LAG (Local Area Group) meetings
- A manager will undertake annual fire safety checks of all Housing Areas

### Housing Service Lead to implement

Landlords will need to name a Nominated Person who will be responsible for ensuring the landlord complies with their health and safety requirements

The nominated person will be required to have appropriate technical background & produce & implement an Engagement Strategy around this (this is stated in Section 1 of the Charter)

"1. To be safe in your home. We will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure."

### Landlord Services & consulted tenants view on how Housing could make improvements for our tenants

- All frontline officers could receive training in noticing and raising fire safety concerns
- There are ongoing issues with getting repairs jobs ordered and completed, including those that affect fire safety

## 2. To know how your landlord is performing

### The Government's Commitments. "We Will..."

- Expect the Regulator of Social Housing to bring in a set of tenant satisfaction measures for all landlords on things that matter to tenants.
- Introduce a new access to information scheme for social housing tenants of housing associations and other private registered providers of social housing, so that information relating to landlords is easily accessible by tenants.
- Ensure landlords provide a clear breakdown of how their income is being spent, including levels of executive remuneration, to be published alongside their tenant satisfaction measures.
- Require landlords to identify a senior person in their organisation who is responsible for ensuring they comply with the consumer standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing.
- Expect landlords to report to every tenant on such matters at least once a year, if not continuously, using technology.

### Housing Service Lead to implement

- Landlords will be required to appoint a Responsible Person at strategic or service lead level to drive performance & culture changes.
- All landlords will be expected to report on the tenant satisfaction & financial measures (a draft of both sets of measures already available). They will provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlords' performance. They will also inform the SHR about how the landlord is complying with **the consumer standards under a proactive consumer regulation regime**.
- The regulator will also work with the **Building Safety Regulator** as it develops performance standards and reporting requirements for high risk buildings.

**2. To Know How Your Landlord Is Performing.** If tenants are to be able to hold their landlords to account, they need information on how their landlord is performing, what decisions it is making and who is responsible.

"We would expect technology to be used, such as an app" quote from White Paper

### Landlord Services' view on what Housing is doing well:

- We already produce the Annual Report and Housing Matters
- We are developing the Tenant Portal (lead officer Steve Gammon Housing Systems)

### Landlord Services/involved tenants view on how Housing could make improvements for our tenants

- Could a project officer assess what information we will be required to produce and how that differs from what we currently produce?

### 3 To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

#### **The Government's Commitments. "We Have Already..."**

- Set out in the Building Safety Bill how we will speed up access to the Housing Ombudsman by removing the need for residents to go to a designated person or wait eight weeks before approaching them – removing the 'democratic filter'.
- Expanded the Housing Ombudsman service which is aiming to halve its decision times by March 2022.
- Increased the Housing Ombudsman's powers to take action against landlords where needed. The Housing Ombudsman has published a new Complaint Handling Code and guidance on new orders that will be implemented from 1 January 2021.

#### **The Government's Commitments. "We Will ..."**

- Support improved complaint handling by landlords and hold them to account through stronger action by the Housing Ombudsman.
- Keep the Housing Ombudsman's powers, and compliance with them, under review and consider ways to strengthen them, including the option of putting the Complaint Handling Code into law.
- Run an awareness campaign so social housing residents know their rights, are confident in navigating their routes to complain, and are aware of how to escalate to get redress where needed.
- Ensure lessons are learned and maintain residents' confidence in the Housing Ombudsman Service through the appointment by the Ombudsman of an independent reviewer by March 2021 to examine any complaints made about the service that the Housing Ombudsman provides.
- Formalise and strengthen the relationship between the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman by introducing a statutory requirement for both bodies to co-operate with each other in undertaking their responsibilities in holding landlords to account.
- Make the Housing Ombudsman a statutory consultee for any proposal concerning changes to the Regulator of Social Housing's economic and consumer standards.
- Make the Regulator of Social Housing a statutory consultee for any changes to the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.
- From March 2021, publish on the Housing Ombudsman's website, reports on the complaints the Housing Ombudsman has handled for individual landlords, as well as the determinations on individual cases.

### **3. To Have Your Complaints Dealt With Promptly and Fairly.**

We are clear that residents should be able to raise concerns without fear and get swift and effective resolution when they do. We heard from some residents that making a complaint can be difficult and take too long – and that it can sometimes take months for the complaint to be resolved, or for the resident to be able to access the Housing Ombudsman.

#### **Housing Service Lead to implement**

- **A system for recording, monitoring & managing complaints**
- **All teams to treat complaints as learning opportunities**
- **All teams to maintain good cross-team and tenants communication re individual complaints**

#### **Landlord Services' view on what Housing is doing well:**

- Feedback has been returned to the Ombudsman on the new code

#### **Landlord Services'/involved tenants view on improvements**

##### **Housing could make:**

- Our management of complaints is challenged by the fact that we are bound by the corporate complaints policy
- Including process where Housing complaints are initially dealt with Corporately
- Examples exist of where tenants have been failed by this policy / process
- Corporate complaints regulated by LGA ombudsman not Housing Ombudsman
- Do we need our own Housing complaints policy & dedicated internal resource?
- A change of culture around complaints from blame to learning would benefit tenants & commitment to training staff, managers & DTTC

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## 5 To have your voice heard by your landlord

### The Government's Commitments. "We Will ...

- Expect the Regulator of Social Housing to require landlords to seek out best practice and consider how they can continually improve the way they engage with social housing tenants.
- Deliver a new opportunities and empowerment programme for social housing residents, to support more effective engagement between landlords and residents, and to give residents tools to influence their landlords and hold them to account.
- Review professional training and development to ensure residents receive a high standard of customer service.

### Housing Service Lead to implement

- Every team need to involve tenants in multiple ways e.g. recruitment panels, consultation on policy review, setting KPIs/service standards
- Tenant Participation can offer advice on how teams do this

### 5. To Have Your Voice Heard By Your Landlord.

The best landlords engage well with their residents and listen to them with respect. We have recently seen many examples of effective engagement with residents on how their homes are managed and run. ... But performance across the sector is not consistent. We heard from residents how important it was their landlords really listened to them. And we heard examples of residents feeling patronised, ignored or treated with disrespect. We want to change this.

### Landlord Services'/tenants view on what we're doing well:

- Tenants on HRB
- Tenants monitor Resident Involvement Strategy
- Tenants involved in Social Value Group
- Community Initiative Fund
- Tenant Scrutiny Panel
- Tenant Training
- You Said We Did (Tenants Associations)
- Housing Matters Magazine & Editorial Group
- Tenant Conference
- DTCP (complaints panel)
- JCAP (service review group for estate management across all stock)

### Improvements Housing could make:

- Repairs Service Review Group to be reinstated
- Make sure we listen to tenants and review involvement processes as necessary
- Managers remind teams of Resident Involvement Strategy commitments so all understand why it makes sense for them to do this
- Need to ensure tenants are on every recruitment panel
- Ensure all policies have consultation built in

## 6 To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in

### The Government's Commitments. "We Have Already..."

#### We have already:

- Announced the Green Homes Grant for 2020/21, which social landlords are eligible to bid for, which will fund up to two thirds of the cost of hiring tradespeople to upgrade the energy performance of homes.
- Announced a £50 million demonstrator project to support the decarbonisation of social housing over 2020/21.
- Published our 25 Year Environment Plan committing to connect people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing.
- Encouraged developments that promote health and wellbeing through the National Planning Policy Framework and National Design Guide.
- Announced a consultation through the Planning for the Future White Paper on proposals to enable more and better green space in development.
- Committed to expanding access to mental health services through the NHS Long Term Plan. Our investment of a further £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24 will ensure that the NHS provides high quality, evidence-based mental health services to an additional 2 million people.
- Acted to tackle segregation and stigmatisation through the planning system.

### The Government's Commitments. "We Will ..."

- Review the Decent Homes Standard to consider if it should be updated, including how it can better support the decarbonisation and energy efficiency of social homes, and improve communal and green spaces.
- Continue to engage with the latest evidence on the impact of housing conditions on health, including COVID-19 transmission, and actively consider options to mitigate these impacts.
- Review professionalization to consider how well housing staff are equipped to work with people with mental health needs and encourage best practice for landlords working with those with mental health needs.
- Clarify the roles of agencies involved in tackling anti-social behaviour and signpost tenants to those agencies who can give them the most appropriate support and assistance when faced with anti-social behaviour.
- Consider the results of the allocations evidence collection exercise findings to ensure that housing is allocated in the fairest way possible and achieves the best outcomes for local places and communities.

## 6: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.

... landlords are expected to provide decent, well-maintained homes and do their bit in keeping neighbourhoods safe and clean. We heard from our discussions with residents ... how important it was that the areas where they lived were decent and well maintained. People talked to us of their pride in their community, but how sometimes this was let down by poor neighbourhood management, upkeep of buildings and the quality of shared spaces. Some of these issues have been magnified by COVID-19; some residents have struggled to find green spaces to exercise and others have experienced isolation, loneliness and the challenge of dealing with anti-social behaviour. We want to change this and ensure that all social housing residents can enjoy good neighbourhoods and access to green space ... and support for wellbeing.

### Housing Service Lead to implement

- Property & Assets re decarbonisation of Housing stock & monitoring compliance with likely-to-be-revised Decent Homes Standard
- Landlord Services re Wellbeing, Mental Health, Green Spaces, Shared Spaces and dealing with ASB
- Allocations for ensuring fair & community-positive allocation of properties

### Landlord Services'/tenants view on what Housing is doing well:

- Welfare calls to tenants
- Mental Health Worker
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- Existing review of green spaces could be repurposed
- Council is strong on commitment to decarbonisation
- Experienced and knowledgeable Community Development team
- LAG meetings for multi-agency approach to ASB
- EM have strong connections to local police
- Looking at how to improve neighbourhoods

### Improvements Housing could make:

- Progress stock condition survey in line with Decent Homes Standard
- Are we applying for Green Homes Grant?
- Ensure Allocations ensures best outcome for places & communities as well as individuals
- Continue to develop & embed our understanding of mental health, wellbeing, and the network of statutory and community sector support available

## 7. To be supported to take your first steps to ownership

### The Government's Commitments. "We Will ...

- The Government believes most people want to own their own homes
- This section describes the steps that have been taken to increase the supply of affordable housing and then outlines the various schemes that will allow tenants to take their first step on the ownership ladder.
- A full evaluation of the Midlands Right to Buy pilot will be published.

### Housing Service Lead to implement

- Assess viability of building more homes
- Assess viability of new finance streams for supported housing
- Assess viability of new shared ownership model (10% stake & 10 year repair free period)
- Assess viability of right to shared ownership on new grant funded homes
- Improve transparency of billing & vfm for leaseholders

### 7. To be supported to take your first step to

**ownership.** The best landlords will ensure there is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow, and that you are aware of them.

### Landlord Services'/tenants view on what we're doing well:

- Tenants have not been involved in this area of the service but are happy to be involved more in future in finding effective ways to consult on identified improvement areas

### Improvements Housing could make:

- Involve tenants in scoping viability actions identified above
- Seek the tenant perspective on future schemes it brings forward for delivery
- Share with a focus group of tenants the outcomes of the Midlands Right to Buy pilot when published

## Charter for Social Housing Residents

Bringing a new “regulatory regime and culture of transparency, accountability, decency and service”

Quote from the introduction by the Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

