



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Clare Miller
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Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
*Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and
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Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
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23 May 2022

To Clare,

Severe Maladministration findings against Clarion Housing Association

I am writing to you about the recent Housing Ombudsman reports into your housing, which found serious problems with leaks, damp, mould, pest control, communal areas, tenancy succession and complaint handling. This follows on from the concerns that were raised last year in relation to the Eastfields Estate in Merton.

No one should have to live in a home with these conditions – and it should not take years to put them right. I am deeply disappointed that as one of the largest social housing landlords, who should be setting an example, you have not been able to meet fundamental standards for your tenants. It is extremely concerning for there to be two such serious cases in quick succession.

I expect you to take every step necessary to address the issues raised, including adhering to the orders and recommendations of the Ombudsman. I fully support the decision by the Ombudsman to conduct a further investigation into this matter, under paragraph 50 of the Housing Ombudsman's scheme, and will pay close attention to their findings.

I also note with concern Clarion's decision to respond to this worrying report by criticising aspects of the Ombudsman's statement. The focus in response to Ombudsman reports such as this must be on putting things right and learning lessons so that some of the most vulnerable in our society get the housing and support they need. A defensive response is completely the wrong approach.

This Government has been clear how important it is that social housing residents can put trust in their landlords to provide a decent home and deal with complaints effectively. The upcoming Social Housing Regulation Bill will bring in a tough new regulatory regime to support this. For my part, I am prepared to take any steps necessary, whether through regulatory or funding mechanisms, to drive up standards and hold landlords responsible for providing social housing residents with decent housing. In light of the Ombudsman report, and Clarion's response to it, I intend to take a personal and direct interest in your association's approach to housing conditions, engagement with residents and vulnerable complainants in particular.

I am copying this letter to the Housing Ombudsman.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

RT HON MICHAEL GOVE MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations