



Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP

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Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister for Housing and Planning
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Dear Minister,

We strongly believe that residents in housing association (HA) properties across the country are being failed. They are being failed by landlords who face insufficient accountability, by complaints processes that exhaust rather than resolve, and by a regulatory framework that has not kept pace with reforms elsewhere in the housing sector. We are therefore writing to urge the Government to address this during this parliamentary session.

Through our casework, we regularly support tenants and leaseholders in HA-managed properties whose experiences point to systemic weaknesses in the current regulatory and redress framework. In many cases, the mechanisms intended to help residents hold their landlord to account either do not apply to housing associations or are ineffective in practice, allowing issues to be delayed, obscured or left unresolved. These concerns are consistent with wider evidence from the Housing Ombudsman, including a high proportion of findings of maladministration across the sector.

While recent legislation has strengthened accountability for private landlords and local authorities, and improved leaseholder rights in privately owned blocks, housing associations have often fallen outside the scope of these reforms.

We welcome recent legislation to strengthen the Social Housing Regulator's powers, establish new consumer standards, and extend some protections to housing association tenants. However, significant gaps remain and we urge the Government to consider the following areas:

Enforcement, redress and Ombudsman compliance

Residents and leaseholders must navigate lengthy and complex internal complaints processes before they can access redress. The current system disproportionately disadvantages those without the time, knowledge or capacity to pursue complaints fully. There are also insufficient clarity and enforcement around Housing Ombudsman determinations: residents and leaseholders frequently reach the end of a long process only to find that findings of maladministration do not result in consistent or timely remedies. We urge the Government to strengthen the Ombudsman's powers to ensure effective compliance, and to create a clearer link between individual complaints and regulatory intervention.

Furthermore, we have found that many of the HAs operating in our constituencies have well-documented histories of repeated service failures and non-compliance with Ombudsman decisions. Without effective penalties for the companies or individuals, HAs have faced little consequence for this. We would therefore like to see the introduction of stronger penalties for non-compliance with Ombudsman decisions and, prosecution for repeated service failures.

Fair and consistent compensation

Compensation for service failure is inconsistent and lacks transparency. Similar cases on the same estates can result in significantly different awards without clear justification. A more structured framework is needed - one that reflects the severity and duration of issues, including their impact on residents' health and wellbeing.

Leaseholder protections and service charges

Leaseholders in HA properties face persistent problems: limited transparency in service charge billing, significant and unexplained cost increases, and restricted influence over major works decisions. We welcome the Government's ongoing leasehold reform agenda and urge that leaseholders in HA-owned buildings are explicitly included within its scope.

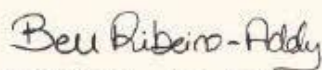
Transparency, information rights and support for vulnerable residents

Housing associations are not subject to the same transparency requirements as local authorities, despite their central role in delivering social housing. Residents should have stronger rights to access information about decisions affecting their homes and finances. Equally, there is insufficient clarity around the duty of care owed to vulnerable residents particularly in relation to repairs, complaints handling and enforcement. Greater specificity in how existing obligations apply in practice is long overdue.

Housing associations play a vital role in the provision of social housing. However, the current framework does not consistently deliver the accountability, transparency and redress that residents and leaseholders are entitled to expect.

We are calling on the Government to bring forward legislative proposals to address these issues and would welcome a meeting to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,



Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP

Labour Member of Parliament for Clapham & Brixton Hill

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