

26 January 2024

Sent via Email

Prime Minister
Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Government proposals to prioritise “British homes for British workers”

Dear Prime Minister and Secretary of State,

We are writing to you as the sector bodies for the not-for-profit social housing sector in the UK, housing over five million people on low incomes, and partner agencies. We wish to express our concern about the [suggested proposal](#) and related coverage of a “British homes for British workers” scheme which we understand the UK government plans to consult on.

At the heart of the issue is the urgent need for more social housing, which provides a stable and affordable home for people who cannot afford to rent privately or buy their own home. Housebuilding has not kept pace with demand for decades and we are now seeing its legacy.

In 2010, funding for affordable housing in England, for example, was cut by 63 per cent, including all funding for social rented homes, causing an 81 per cent fall in delivery of new social rented housing. In 2022-23 only 9,561 social homes were delivered in England, compared to nearly 40,000 in 2010. In the same year, 52,800 households were accepted by councils as requiring help because they were homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. Homelessness is now at [record levels](#), with councils and voluntary sector support agencies facing huge temporary accommodation pressures. As at June last year, over 105,000 households were in temporary accommodation, the highest number this century.

We all deserve safe housing, regardless of where we are from. Further rationing of an already scarce resource does not address the fundamental failures of the last 40 years - we have simply not built the homes the UK needs to ensure everybody has a safe and secure place to live. At the same time, we’ve seen net losses of social rented homes grow - exceeding 200,000 since 2011 - mainly due to right to buy.

Social housing is designed to support those in the greatest need. Government data shows that 90 per cent of new social housing lettings go to UK nationals, with long waiting lists in all areas. Imposing extended qualification periods before people can even get on the housing register is likely to force more people into homelessness. If the government’s main concern is to increase the availability of social lettings, it could achieve this far more effectively by building more social housing.

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The forthcoming Spring Budget is the perfect opportunity for the government to provide the much-needed investment so we can boost supply and make a shared ambition to deliver more homes a reality. We are committed to working with you and the government to tackle the housing crisis, but we need a long-term plan.

Kind regards,



Gavin Smart
Chief Executive Officer
Chartered Institute of Housing

Co-signatories:

Kate Henderson, CEO, National Housing Federation
Councillor Darren Rodwell, Chair, Local Infrastructure and Net Zero Board, Local Government Association
Paul Price, CEO, Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH)
Cllr. Aydin Dickerdem, Chair, ARCH
Eamon McGoldrick, Managing Director of National Federation of ALMOs
Claire Higgins, Vice Chair, PlaceShapers
Rick Henderson, CEO, Homeless Link
Polly Neate, CEO, Shelter
Matt Downie, CEO, Crisis
Emma Haddad, CEO, St Mungo's
Ben Twomey, CEO, Generation Rent
Bridget Young, CEO, The No Accommodation Network
Yasmin Halima, Executive Director, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
Andrea Cleaver, CEO, Welsh Refugee Council
Alicja Zalesinska, CEO, Tai Pawb