



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Dame Meg Hillier MP
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Jeremy Pocklington CB
Permanent Secretary

***Department for Levelling up, Housing and
Communities***

4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 2DF

www.gov.uk/dluhc

Tel: 0303 444 2785

Email: PSPerm.Sec@communities.gov.uk

Dear Dame Meg,

Thank you for inviting me to the Public Accounts Committee of 31 January 2022.

I am writing to provide a response to the Committee on how the department will use the planned reform programme to better support renters in understanding and exercising their rights.

On June 16th, the department published the *Fairer Private Rented Sector* White Paper, setting out its 12-point plan to fundamentally reform the sector for landlords and tenants for the first time in a generation. The White Paper clearly demonstrates our ambition and determination to give private renters a better deal, with greater security of tenure and safer, higher quality homes.

By introducing the Decent Homes Standard for the first time into the private rented sector, the department will ensure tenants have access to safe and decent homes and will contribute to delivering on our Levelling up housing mission to halve the number of non-decent rented homes by 2030.

The department will also abolish the Section 21 'no fault' evictions, increasing security and stability for tenants, and deliver a simpler and more secure tenancy structure.

In addition to the above, the department will also help tenants by allowing a rent increase only once per year, ending the use of rent review clauses, and furthering tenants' ability to challenge excessive rent increases through the First Tier Tribunal. The department will work with the Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) to target the areas where there are unacceptable delays in court proceedings. This includes improving dispute resolution, providing support to both landlords and tenants, and strengthening tenants' ability to hold landlords to account by the introduction of a new single Ombudsman that all private landlords must join. The redress scheme will provide a clear and streamlined route to address issues relating to property standards, repairs, maintenance, poor landlord practice and poor


landlord behaviour in the sector. It will also help both tenants and landlords avoid the cost and stress of going to court to resolve issues.

The department will also improve guidance and communications to make sure renters are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Alongside this, the department will introduce a new property portal to ensure tenants, landlords and local authorities have the information they need. The Portal will also make it easier for tenants to access information about rental properties, enabling them to make informed choices about where they rent and who they rent from.

Additionally, the department will make it illegal to have blanket bans on renting to families with children or those in receipt of benefits (so called 'No DSS'). The department will also give tenants the right to request a pet which a landlord must consider and cannot unreasonably refuse.

Taken together, this is the most fundamental reform we have done; our landmark White Paper *A Fairer Private Rented Sector* sets out a plan to reform the sector and level up housing quality in the country, building on the vision in the Levelling Up White Paper.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeremy Pocklington". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JEREMY POCKLINGTON