

Green Paper: A 'New Deal' For Social Housing

The new [Social Housing Green Paper](#) "aims to rebalance the relationship between landlords and residents, tackle stigma and ensure social housing can act as a stable base and support social mobility".

The Green Paper sets out 5 core themes:

- Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities
- Expanding supply of social homes and supporting home ownership
- Quick and effective resolution of complaints
- Empowering residents and strengthening the role of the regulator
- Ensuring homes are safe and decent

TACKLING STIGMA AND CELEBRATING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

- Improve fairness, quality and safety to social housing residents
- Tackle issues facing both residents and landlords in social housing
- Breakdown inequalities in social housing
- Ensure tenants feel at home in their community rather than seeing it just as a place to live

EXPANDING SUPPLY OF HOMES AND SUPPORTING HOME OWNERSHIP

- Build more social housing
- Greater flexibilities for LAs on spending RTB receipts and no longer having to sell vacant, higher value stock
- Funding certainty for some HAs
- Help people build up more equity (as little as 1% a year) through shared ownership

QUICK AND EFFECTIVE RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

- Quicker and easier processes
- Access to effective dispute resolution
- More support to access redress options
- Access to advice to make a complaint and have it resolved quickly and effectively

ENSURING HOMES ARE SAFE AND DECENT

- Good design in new social housing
- Stronger voice for residents in improved system of fire safety
- Review Decent Homes to ensure it delivers the right standards/reflects Government's priorities
- Continued choice for LAs over use of fixed term tenancies, to give residents greater security

EMPOWERING RESIDENTS AND STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE REGULATOR

- Stronger voice for residents to influence decisions and hold landlords to account
- Stronger role for regulator to drive up standards and ensure social homes are well managed and quality places to live
- Focus on issues that matter most to tenants
- 'Sharper teeth' to intervene when necessary
- Performance indicators and new league tables, rebalancing the landlord/tenant relationship to hold bad practice to account and ensure residents are treated with dignity and respect

The erosh view

We welcome any proposals to improve the image of social housing, to address the shortage of decent homes, to strengthen regulation, and to empower residents. However, the Green Paper appears quite weak with 'aims to', 'could', 'plans to', 'looking at', 'consider' etc. all of which suggest more of a 'wish list' rather than concrete plans. This is of course a Green Paper and we are also awaiting the Green Paper on [social care for older people](#) now due in the autumn 2018. But opportunities have been missed which recognise the role sheltered and retirement housing can play in a national strategy. For example:

TACKLING STIGMA AND CELEBRATING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

- Increasing numbers of older people make a significant contribution to thriving communities.
- If communities are designed to accommodate older people, they will be good places to live for everyone.

EXPANDING SUPPLY OF HOMES AND SUPPORTING HOME OWNERSHIP

- There is no mention of specialist housing including sheltered and retirement housing. Although it could be argued that this is encompassed within 'social housing', it would have been good if specialist housing for older people (existing and new) had been specifically mentioned as part of a wider strategy to free up larger accommodation suitable for families.
- Funding certainty for some housing association may help those organisations who have delayed the development of new sheltered and retirement housing schemes.

QUICK AND EFFECTIVE RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

- Many older people are isolated and excluded especially as they are still less likely to have access to or use the internet and social media. Improved complaints processes need to recognise this and ensure that older people are not further excluded.

ENSURING HOMES ARE SAFE AND DECENT

- Good design needs to incorporate lifetime homes standards to ensure homes meet people's changing needs
- Older people make up a large percentage of those living in non-decent homes so this needs to be reflected in any review of the Decent Homes Standards.

EMPOWERING RESIDENTS AND STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE REGULATOR

- Older people must not be excluded from opportunities to influence decisions and hold their landlords (and service providers) to account.
- The quality of specialist sheltered and retirement housing needs to be reflected in any new or revised standards.
- To be meaningful, any performance indicators and league tables must use both qualitative and quantitative measures.

What next?

The Green Paper launches a consultation process. Government has invited views on the proposals for the future of social housing up until 6 November 2018. If you would like to contribute to erosh's response, please email your views to Rebecca Mollart, ceo@erosh.co.uk