

National Housing Federation Update – July 2019

Political highlights

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7. the National Housing Summit.

Political highlights

- Building safety was rightly at the top of the agenda as we approached **the second year anniversary of the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower**. The Government's consultation on proposals for reform of the building safety regulatory system opened in June and we are working with our members to make a submission (further updates on section below).
- There have been **a number of recent debates in Parliament on building safety** and the Government's response to the Grenfell Tower fire. We have worked closely with MPs to brief them on the work the sector is doing to keep tenants safe, and what more needs to be done to secure long lasting change.
- As part of our engagement on the Spending Review, we have met with local and national politicians, including **Stephen Timms MP** and **Jack Brereton MP**. We discussed the importance of investment in social housing to support communities and solve the housing crisis.
- Kate Henderson has had **two meetings with the Housing Minister, Kit Malthouse MP**.
 - In the first, we updated him on Together with Tenants and discussed our work toward the upcoming Spending Review. Kit was impressed by the volume of responses we received to our Together with Tenants consultation, and by how positive the response to the draft plan has been.
 - In the second, we discussed the sector's upcoming shared ownership campaign (further updates on section below).
- Kate Henderson hosted a roundtable with **Will Quince MP**, the Minister with responsibility for supported housing at the Department for Work and Pensions.
- Over the past few months, **Parliament debated many topics relating to social housing**, including accountability and Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). The Federation has engaged closely with these debates.

- Together with Tenants was positively mentioned by MPs, and Shadow Housing Minister **Sarah Jones MP** quoted research from the Federation on the need for more social housing.
- We worked closely with the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee on their **MMC inquiry**. We provided spoken and written evidence, and organised for the Committee to visit a modular housing factory run by Swan, one of our members.

1. Building safety

Key messages

- Our sector needs to act now to **ensure that every resident feels safe in their home** – in preparation for major legislative changes, and because it's the right thing to do.
- The Federation is committed to doing everything we can to support our members with this work, and drive up standards of building safety. **This includes:**
 - supporting members through ongoing safety tests and remedial work
 - monitoring the Grenfell Tower fire public inquiry
 - preparing for the future of building safety and showcasing best practice.
- **We are currently focusing on the Government's live consultation** that proposes major reform of the building safety regulatory system, and want to hear your views.

Quick update on Barking fire

- Earlier this month, a fire that started on a balcony in Barking destroyed 20 flats.
- Following this event, the Government has published an advice note for building owners on the risks arising from balconies on residential buildings.
- We've summarised the advice note on our website, and made it available to download, and recommend that you and your teams take the time to read it.

Update on current consultation

- The biggest impact for associations with buildings in scope of the new system will be the **requirement to ensure your buildings are fit for purpose** prior to occupation.
- At 200 pages, the consultation contains a lot of detail, but covers **five broad areas:**
 - buildings in scope of the proposed new regulatory system
 - a proposed new dutyholder regime
 - plans for ensuring residents have a voice
 - a proposed building safety regulator
 - details on the regulator, including enforcement, compliance and sanctions.
- We've published a **briefing on our website** that provides more information.
- Following the consultation, we expect the Government to put forward a **Bill in Parliament in early 2020** to enact the required legislation.

Share your views through our survey

- The Federation will respond to the consultation on behalf of the housing association sector, so **we want to hear what your organisation thinks** of the proposals.
- We've produced a survey for sharing feedback that we hope your organisation is able to complete **by 15 July**. Further details are on our website.

2. The Comprehensive Spending Review and Brexit

Key messages

- **We have announced** our submission for the next Comprehensive Spending Review, calling for a long term deal for in housing and communities in England.
- We went public with our **CSR asks in June**, calling for large scale, long term investment in homes, communities and people to end the housing crisis for good.
- We're also thinking ahead to Brexit. We know it will bring some challenges to housing association businesses so **we're supporting members to prepare** and making sure the Government is aware of the possible impacts.

Latest intelligence on the CSR

- Due to Brexit and political change, the Government is yet to announce if the spending review will cover **one or three years**.
- **We've gone public with our long-term asks** regardless, to begin building the case for a transformational investment in housing.
- If there's a one year review, we're calling for the Government to **extend the existing affordable homes programme** for another year to maintain housing delivery.

Our four asks

1. **Invest in building the homes our country needs.** The only way to build the 145,000 social homes England needs, and to meet the Government's 300,000 homes a year target, is with large scale, long-term government funding. Our new modelling shows that the Government must invest £12.8bn a year in real terms, for 10 years, to kick start this countrywide housebuilding programme.
2. **Invest in places to bring the country together.** Communities in parts of England that have been left behind face reduced opportunities and poorer social outcomes, holding people and our economy back. Housing associations are key community anchors and we're calling for a new, £10bn national regeneration fund over 10 years so they can work with local partners to deliver this.
3. **Invest in the support to enable people to thrive.** A fair and effective welfare system and long-term funding for supported housing gives people the support they need to thrive. The Government should invest in improving Universal Credit, create a fairer welfare system so people can genuinely afford to pay their rent, and create a national support budget to fund the support costs of supported housing.
4. **Invest in safety.** Everyone has the right to feel safe in their home. The tragic fire at Grenfell Tower showed that we need systemic change in building and fire safety, which we must invest in as a nation. We're calling for the Government to broaden the scope of the existing £400m Cladding Remediation Fund and create a Building Safety Fund to cover one-off vital costs of making homes safe and secure.

• 3. Supply

Key messages

- We're holding a **sector-wide conversation** with our members to explore how we can build more homes.
- Despite the market uncertainty, housing need remains acute and there's an expectation that the sector will deliver, using the new funding, flexibility, and government support on offer.
- **We talked to members about the barriers** preventing them from building more and exploring ways we can do things differently. Now, along with continuing to lobby hard on key policy issues like land, **we're developing some solutions** to help address the internal and sector barriers we face.

- **We also run a quarterly survey on supply** to get the true picture of what our members are delivering. If you are developing new homes and don't complete the survey, please get in touch with us.

The first round of conversations – what we heard

More than 300 people from across the sector came together with us to discuss the barriers to building more homes, with a focus on what's within our control to change. Through these conversations, four themes came up time and time again:

1. **Skills:** There's a shortage of skilled development people in the sector, and there's also no recognised qualification or accreditation for development professionals, making it hard to ensure our people have everything they need to be able to deliver.
2. **Partnerships:** It's not always easy to find the right partners, it can be hard to agree the parameters for a joint project, and relationships and trust are key.
3. **Ambition:** Every single person we spoke to was ambitious to do their part to end the housing crisis, and we saw a real willingness to try new things. But there's an opportunity to share and celebrate these new approaches more widely, to talk about what's worked and why, and inspire each other to do things differently.
4. **Risk:** Board members can understandably be cautious, conscious of their primary role to safeguard their organisation's stability. There was an appetite to set up forums for boards to talk more about how to balance the risks inherent to development.

What next?

- We're holding **three roundtables in July** on skills, local authority partnerships and housing association partnerships to explore these options further
- We're also **publishing a short report in July** that gives more detail on the findings of the conversation and sets out our initial thinking on the options for a future plan.

• 5. Great Places

- Our Great Places programme has been **exploring what makes a place great**, and the role for housing associations in creating successful, thriving communities.
- The programme is **led by the Great Places Commission**, a group of housing leaders with direct experience of regeneration and placemaking, and is focused on the unique housing challenges facing urban areas in the North and the Midlands.
- **In the summer, the Commission will publish its final recommendations.** The recommendations will cover a range of issues from disposals policies to how we collaborate with local communities. The recommendations will provide an opportunity to forge new alliances on the left and with local government.
- Echoing our Comprehensive Spending Review ask, the Commission will call for an **ambitious new national programme on regeneration**, to include £10bn in funding over the next 10 years.
- We will organise a **programme of member events and resources** to share learnings from the Commission's findings and explore how housing associations can take the recommendations forward in partnership with local stakeholders.
- As well as taking the recommendations forward, as part of the Federation's broader work on regeneration, we will begin exploring the issues around **estate regeneration in high-value areas.**

- **Update on our shared ownership campaign**
 - We've done extensive research and engagement over the last two years and discovered that there is **still a lot of confusion and misunderstanding about shared ownership**, and housing associations' role in providing it.
 - That's why **we're launching an ambitious campaign** to explain shared ownership with one voice, creating a recognisable brand, and redefining what it is – and isn't.
 - Our ambition is to raise the profile of shared ownership with the public and politicians, but we can't do this alone. So we're asking members with shared ownership properties to **make an annual contribution and sign up** to the campaign.
 - By signing up to support the campaign, you will get access to the following:
 - **A campaign toolkit** of branding materials, including templates and resources that you can easily apply to your own marketing and advertising activities.
 - **A new campaign website** that will educate the public about what shared ownership is (and isn't), helping you myth-bust common customer questions.
 - This will link through to a **national shared ownership property portal** that will feature shared ownership listings and generate enquiries for properties.
 - **An ambitious national advertising campaign.**
 - **Interactive workshops** that will explore your business objectives, and ensure the campaign delivers for your organisation and regional market(s).
 - Lots of our members with shared ownership properties have already signed up. **Join them - visit our website to find out more.**
- **Has your organisation completed our Sector Intelligence Survey?**
 - We perform at our best when we know more about our members. That's why we're currently asking you to complete our annual sector intelligence survey **by 19 July**.
 - The information you provide **allows us to improve our services and build an accurate national picture of our sector** that supports our policy, influencing and media work. The more information we get, the more we can tailor our services to best support your organisation, and the sector as a whole.
 - **Your company secretary should have received our survey** to complete on behalf of your organisation. **If this hasn't been received, please let our Member Intelligence team via membership@housing.org.uk.**
- **Are you coming to the National Housing Summit?**
 - We're delighted to be hosting this year's Summit at the iconic Barbican centre.
 - The key themes are building trust, promoting quality and driving delivery.
 - Confirmed speakers include:
 - Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive, LGA
 - Nick Walkley, Chief Executive, Homes England
 - Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan MP, Chair of the Treasury Select Committee
 - Fiona McGregor, Chief Executive, Regulator of Social Housing
 - Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

