

NFA response to the Government's Social Housing Green Paper and Regulation Call for Evidence – One Page Summary

Overall

- * We welcome announcements on HVA Levy/ recognition around problems with RtB/ confirmation that Fixed Term Tenancies will be kept at a local level
- * Much to support in the Green Paper, but we feel that by defining social housing as a safety net and a springboard, it is perpetuating stigma: social housing needs to play full part in mixed tenure housing market. Need to provide decent, good quality homes for all in neighbourhoods which residents can be proud of.

Decent Homes

- *ALMOs have often been working to Decent Homes + standards, and have local plans in place to ensure decent, high quality homes.
- *We would welcome a review of the Decent Homes standard, especially around the areas of safety, energy efficiency and neighbourhoods
- *Any changes need to be sufficiently resourced

Complaints

- *We fully support giving residents a stronger voice to influence decisions and improve performance
- *There is a lot of good practice already available in the sector, and we want Government to learn from this good practice and share it
- *We support local complaints policies and procedures which are co-designed with residents
- *Effective complaints management is about having a culture where complaints are encouraged, resolved and learned from. Organisations need to provide sufficient assurance to the Regulator that this culture is in place, with the Regulator taking a risk based approach to regulating this.

Regulation

- *The Social Housing Regulator should be strengthened to be proactive in relation to consumer standards and widened to cover all landlords of social housing, including councils and their managing agents
- *Any changes to regulation should be designed with residents and residents should be involved (where they want to be) in the regulation of their landlord
- *There should be a rating on consumer standards added to the existing regulations on Viability and Governance
- *A basket of KPI comparison data will be useful, but it needs to sit alongside an Inspection Routine. Inspections need to be undertaken on a risk basis and focused on areas that matter to tenants, such as health & safety, repairs, customer complaints, opportunities to be involved.
- *Any additional regulation should be fit for purpose, proportionate, and help to achieve good outcomes for tenants. It should also have teeth.
- *We believe there should be stronger representation for tenants at a national level with strong regional structures underneath

Stigma

- *We are calling for the Government to provide concrete support and funding to the See the Person campaign
- *We want a consistent long-term commitment from Government to ensure social housing is recognised as an equal tenure within a mixed-tenure market
- *Ministers and MPs need to be called out for using stigmatising language
- *We are proposing further research into if and how stigmatisation of social housing is leading to discrimination against social housing tenants

Expanding Supply

- *We welcome the lifting of the Borrowing Cap and look forward to the sector building
- *We welcome flexibilities on Right to Buy, but these flexibilities should be extended across the country. We also think that discounts need to be reduced to sensible levels and eligibility criteria lengthened.