

# News from around the sector

White Paper news roundup  
23 November 2020

## Social tenants won't benefit from White Paper without 'increase access to legal aid'

Social housing tenants may not benefit from a raft of improvements proposed by the Social Housing White Paper if no provisions are made to increase access to legal aid.

That is the view of the Law Society, who are calling for government to do more in this area.

## Tone of Social Housing White Paper 'not helpful in some places'

There are details missing in the White Paper and the "the tone is not helpful in some places".

That is the view of some speakers at the HQN Housing Management Conference today.

That included Jenny Osbourne, Chief Executive at Tpas, who was speaking in a morning panel session.

## Grenfell United respond to the Social Housing White Paper

Grenfell United, the group that represent the victims, survivors and bereaved from the Grenfell Tower tragedy, have responded to the Social Housing White Paper.

The Paper comes three and a half years after the fire at Grenfell Tower, and was issued as a response to the systemic issues in social housing that were brought to light on that evening.

In their response they say: "Grenfell United have long fought for one of the legacies of the Grenfell fire tragedy to be that people who live in social housing feel that there is a difference in their lives.

## Sector reacts to Social Housing White Paper

The sector has been giving its reaction to the Social Housing White Paper, released yesterday.

## **White Paper dampens hopes for social housing investment**

The Government has released its Social Housing White Paper and with it, a set of new measures to better measure the sector against and "give residents a greater voice". But many were also hoping that as part of the Paper, the government would invest in social housing. However, one line in the release dampens those expectations somewhat, with a continued focus on ownership seemingly staying.

## **Social Housing White Paper introduces 'tenant satisfaction measures'**

The wait for the Social Housing White Paper is finally over, and government has set out in the document how it intends to "improve social housing and give residents a greater voice". Released today, the White Paper is set to "make landlords more accountable for the services they deliver" and will introduce a set of "tenant satisfaction measures that landlords will have to report against". As part of these tenant satisfaction measures, the government says it will "expect landlords to report to every tenant on such matters at least once a year, if not continuously using technology."

## **Regulator of Social Housing to get a 'new arm' in White Paper shake up**

The Government has set out how it will introduce more proactive consumer regulation as part of the Social Housing White Paper. The Paper, which has been long awaited by the sector, has introduced new tenant satisfaction measures and an information scheme for housing association tenants. Long hinted at by the Regulator itself, the consumer regulation will be managed by creating a "new arm" of the RSH, which will look at issues including "quality of homes, repairs, meaningful engagement with tenants and complaints handling".

## **Decent Homes Standard to undergo 2021 review**

As announced in the Social Housing White Paper, the Decent Homes Standard is set to be reviewed, with a first decision being made by Autumn 2021. The White Paper states: "We will review the Decent Homes Standard and consider whether it needs to be updated to ensure it is delivering what is needed for safety and decency now. As a first step the review will consider the case for change. We aim to complete this part of the Review by Autumn 2021."

## **Social Housing White Paper to 'review professionalisation'**

The Government have announced that as part of the Social Housing White Paper, they will review "professionalisation". Introducing the review, the Government said: "We have heard how, in social housing, people's experience, including stigma, can be shaped by their interactions with frontline staff." They add they want "to ensure that frontline social housing staff have the right knowledge and skills to work sensitively with people who have or are at risk of developing mental health problems, building on examples of good practice in the sector."

## **Boris Johnson: White Paper will deal with the 'scandal' within social housing**

The Prime Minister has said that the Social Housing White Paper will help to make sure "social housing tenants are treated with the respect they deserve". Writing in the Paper, Boris Johnson uses an example from when he was a newspaper reporter as evidence for how long this has been ongoing. Johnson says he reported on a house that had damp, condensation, and mould, but that is not what has stuck with him.

## **Consultation on smoke and carbon monoxide alarms launched**

As part of the Social Housing White Paper, Government has unveiled a new consultation on smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Government said there was "overwhelming support for consistency in safety measures across social and private rented housing" in responses to the Green Paper, prompting the launch of this consultation. They added that it is "unacceptable that around 200,000 social households are without a working smoke alarm and over 2.3 million are without a working carbon monoxide alarm".