



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Kelly Tolhurst MP

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government**

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Murad Qureshi AM
London Assembly
City Hall
110 The Queens Walk
London
SE1 2AA

Dear Murad,

Thank you for your letter of 30 October to the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP about the private rented sector. I have been asked to reply.

As announced in the Queen's Speech, the Government has committed to introduce a package of reforms to deliver a better deal for renters, and a fairer and more effective rental market. A Renters' Reform Bill will enhance renters' security and improve protections for short-term tenants by abolishing 'no-fault' evictions. This will include repealing Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 and represents a generational change in the law that governs private renting.

Our consultation, which closed in October 2019 received almost 20,000 responses which will be carefully considered. At the current time however, our collective efforts are focused on protecting people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We will respond fully to the consultation in due course, when the urgent concerns of this emergency have passed.

However, the government has put in place unprecedented measures to protect and support renters this winter. Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, landlords are required to give tenants 6 months' notice except in the most serious circumstances such as anti-social behaviour, fraud and arrears of more than 6 months' rent. This will help to ensure that tenants are not asked to leave their homes over winter.

We have also changed the law to ensure bailiffs do not enforce evictions over the period of national restrictions or over the Christmas period. This means that no eviction notices are to be served until 11 January at the earliest and, given the 14 day notice period required, no evictions are expected to be enforced until 25 January 2021 at the earliest. The only exceptions to this are the most serious circumstances: illegal occupation, false statement, anti-social behaviour, perpetrators of domestic abuse in social housing, where a property is unoccupied following the death of a tenant and extreme rent arrears equivalent to 9 months' rent with any arrears accrued since 23 March discounted. We will aim to provide further guidance shortly regarding the operation of the exemptions following consultation with the judiciary.

In relation to rough sleepers, we are well prepared to deal with the impacts of COVID-19 and are working closely with local authorities to support vulnerable groups, including homeless people. We recognise the challenges faced by many who are sleeping rough and have supported local authorities with £3.2 million in targeted funding to ensure that we minimise

the risk to those currently unable to self-isolate. This funding will assist local authorities in providing accommodation and support to vulnerable people who are at risk of, or who have been diagnosed with, coronavirus.

Finally, £1.6 billion of additional funding will go to local authorities to enable them to respond to other COVID-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, including stepping up support for the adult social care workforce and for services helping the most vulnerable, including homeless people.

Taken together, these measures help to ensure that tenants who are in genuine need of protection are not asked to leave their homes over winter, while allowing landlords to obtain possession of their property in the most egregious cases.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Kelly Tolhurst'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Kelly' and the last name 'Tolhurst' clearly distinguishable.

KELLY TOLHURST MP