

London Tenants Federation, National Federation of TMOs and London Federation of Housing Cooperatives

A coalition formed to inform tenants and to facilitate, with our members federations, organisations and associations, a genuine voice for tenants in London in challenging current threats to our homes and communities.

PRESS RELEASE

London Housing Coalition calls on House of Lords to block the destructive Housing and Planning Bill 2016

Three organisations that represent many of London's social housing tenants say the Housing and Planning Bill introduces a disastrous set of proposals aimed at ending decent secure housing for ordinary Londoners.

The coalition cites lack of consultation, a fast track through the House of Commons which provided inadequate detail, lack of financial information and evidence of the bills detrimental consequences, as a reason for asking that the House of Lords block this destructive bill.

- Pay to Stay - £40,000 upper limit for total London household income - means that families will have to pay a market rent (or close to it) for their homes. As many taxes increase and benefits decrease at around £40,000, some families face falling off a financial cliff.
- Councils will be forced to sell flats as they become empty in high cost areas; that's most of London. Camden Council, for example, could lose almost half its properties. Money will go to central Government to plough into the private high rent sector. It also means much lower chance of council tenants getting a transfer if their housing needs change.
- Introducing insecure tenancies (2-5 years) for new council tenants - destabilising established thriving communities and creating insecurity and uncertainty for families.

This comes on top of the introduction of insecure tenancies already implemented by the large Housing Associations at up to 80% market rents. For each new 80% market rent home (deemed to be 'affordable') built, an existing social home has been changed to an affordable rent home.

Council housing is also made up of co-ops and tenant management organisations (TMOs). Contrary to myth, council housing is not subsidised by central or local Government but self-financing. The big difference with private rented accommodation is that, with social housing, no one needs to take a profit so rents can be genuinely affordable. Contrary to the myth of a dependency culture many tenants are involved in making their estates better places to live through tenants' associations, TMOs and cooperatives.

Housing is a necessity not an investment - everyone needs a secure and a decent place to call home at a fair equitable rent. This bill is a disaster for all social housing tenants and their communities. 25% of Londoners already need government help with their housing costs, 50,000 people are in temporary accommodation and this Bill will only make the situation worse.

Lord Kerslake, former head of the civil service accuses government ministers of trying to phase out social housing altogether.

London Housing Coalition calls on House of Lords to stay the destructive Housing and Planning Bill until a full assessment of the proposals can be carried out.

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