

To Mayor of London Sadiq Khan



Act to control rents and secure homes for all

We welcome your promise to fix the housing crisis.

London and the UK are increasingly unequal and divided. Housing pressures in London are pushing up costs throughout the south. Most people are paying more for less security, worse conditions and fewer rights, with a rising proportion of income going on rent, alongside growing overcrowding and homelessness.

Recent policies have made the situation worse; the latest example is the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

If implemented, the Act will push up rents, reduce security of tenure, lead to market sell-off of thousands of social rented homes, increase displacement and the break-up of communities while doing little to improve the situation for those condemned to exploitative private renting and homelessness. This is already driving ordinary people out of communities, hitting women and ethnic minorities hardest.

A broad alliance, including tenants of all tenures, trade unions, housing professionals, academics, faith leaders, councillors, MPs and Lords, are calling on the government to think again. We want you to add your voice to this opposition.

The pressure has already compelled ministers to abandon the 'Pay to Stay' tenant tax, and pause the extension of Right to Buy and the market sale of council homes to pay for it. Some government funding has been restored for rented housing, and letting fees are to be scrapped.

The secondary legislation needed to implement the rest of the Act has not yet been introduced. But the Housing minister wants to persist in plans to end secure tenancies.

We call on you to reject Government moves towards

time-limited and means tested housing stratified by income. 'Affordable' rent up to 80% market rates, Starter Homes and scrapping of lifetime secure tenancies are disastrous for our communities. Less security of tenure results in more social cleansing, with entire neighbourhoods stripped of vital social networks and character as people on average and low incomes are priced out.

- A decent, secure, affordable home should be a right, not a short-term privilege. We need to protect permanent tenancies for council and housing association tenants and extend security further: scrap six-month Assured Shorthold Tenancies in the private rented sector.
- So called 'regeneration' schemes that threaten 80-plus estates in London must be suspended, with a residents' right to vote on proposals and an option of no strings attached investment in new and existing council housing at social rents with secure tenancies.
- Private property developers should be prevented from using secret 'viability assessments' to get planning permission so they can build homes few can afford, many of which stand empty. We call for full publication of viability assessments on all developments.
- Public land must be used to launch a programme of new council house building. At the now-unused Holloway Prison site at least 400 genuinely affordable homes could be built.

We call on the Mayor of London and all our elected representatives including other city mayors, councillors and MPs to publicly oppose the Housing and Planning Act and support the campaign to replace it with action for controlled rents and secure homes for all.

Yours

Eileen Short, for Axe the Housing Act

Adrian Newman, Bishop of Stepney

Ken Loach, filmmaker (including *I, Daniel Blake* and *Cathy Come Home*)

Steve Turner, assistant general secretary, Unite the union

Phil Sedler, chair, Tower Hamlets Tenants Federation

Suz Muna, Unite Housing Workers, and National Executive member

Kevin Courtney, general secretary, National Union of Teachers

ADD YOUR NAME HERE:

Name	Organisation	Postcode	Email/phone

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Return by scan to info@axethehousingact.org.uk or post to **Axe the Housing Act c/o DCH PO Box 33519 London E2 9WW**



AXE the **HOUSING ACT**

CONTROL RENTS  **SECURE HOMES FOR ALL**

AXE THE HOUSING ACT is supported by Defend Council Housing, Radical Housing Network, Generation Rent, tenant groups, Unison, GMB, CWU, Bakers, NUT trade unions, Unite Housing Workers, London Gypsy Traveller Unit, National Bargee Travellers Association, the Green Party, John McDonnell MP, Peoples Assembly, Momentum and more

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