

## Axe The Act – Model Letter for Housing Association Tenants to their Landlords

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Dear [Insert Name]

I am a tenant of [Insert HA Name] and want to know what your policies are in relation to proposals in the Housing & Planning Act 2016. There is wide and growing opposition to the Act's detrimental impact on present and future tenants and housing provision, and I am asking you to ensure:

- Information about the Act goes out to all residents, and meetings/forums held to discuss the implications for them, for [insert HA name] and for housing provision locally and nationally
- That residents have an opportunity to contribute our views to [insert HA name] Board on how you respond to the Act
- That you do not implement the 'optional' Pay to Stay means tested tenant tax, or Right to Buy extension funded by selling off council homes.
- That you publicly lobby for a change of policy and adopt a policy of non-implementation of the Act

Housing associations began with a commitment to easing homelessness, overcrowded and unsanitary housing, and to put decent housing within the reach of all, protecting tenants from unscrupulous private landlords. Since the 1980s, the sector has benefited from a considerable injection of public funds, whether indirectly through council stock transfers and housing benefit payments, or directly through grants for development, services and other housing projects.

The Housing Act is a fundamental attack on these aims and threatens to shatter the stability of our communities. It does nothing to address the housing crisis, but will exacerbate the pressure on, and the cost of, all types of housing:

- **Pay to Stay** would mean rent increases for tenant households with two people on a gross taxable income over £31,000 (£40,000 in London). This is unfair, destructive of mixed communities, and unworkable, and Government have backed off forcing this through. It is however still optional. I ask that my HA commits to non-implementation of Pay to Stay.
- The government intends to undermine the legal standing of **Secure Tenancies**, but HAs can commit to secure tenancies in principle and behave as though they still had a legal basis. I ask that my own HA continues to offer and honour secure ('assured') tenancies.
- **Right to Buy** is voluntary for HAs, and is a double threat to the stock of genuinely affordable homes. Firstly it will reduce the number of units in high demand areas where new development is difficult, and will force councils to sell one of homes to subsidise the HA for this loss. I ask that my own HA commits to non-implementation of Right to Buy.
- **De-Regulation** will mean that associations are free to sell off rented homes, or switch tenure from social rent to market rent without seeking consent from tenants or the Social Housing Regulator. It will lead to an uncontrolled loss of social housing and put tenants directly into the hands of unscrupulous commercial landlords. I ask that my own HA commits to retaining its social housing stock and commits not to change the tenure of tenant properties.