



8 June 2017 General election

Housing at a crossroads

This general election needs to focus attention on housing, a major concern for voters. Five million people are on council waiting lists; buying a home has never been more unaffordable; private renters typically spend half their income on rent; homelessness has doubled since 2010; good homes are being demolished in the name of 'regeneration'.

There are many places where people are being priced-out and communities broken by rising housing costs, benefit cuts and the shortage of genuinely affordable homes. Huge damage is being done to our society by insecure, unaffordable, sub-standard housing.

We need action to improve the situation for private tenants, living with constant rent rises and only two months' from eviction. In Britain rents are highest ever as a proportion of incomes, with private renters paying the highest rents with the least security in Europe. The next government must take action to improve and extend tenancy rights and control rents.

We believe building more homes that are genuinely affordable and secure is essential. This requires long-term government investment and freeing local councils to build the homes we need. Council housing pays for itself and is a permanent community asset.

We are also concerned about the role of housing associations (HAs), set up as 'social landlords' to help people in housing need but becoming increasingly commercial. We call on the next government to make HAs more accountable, restore regulation and demand that they build more homes for rent at not-for profit social rent levels.

Housing is at a crossroads. Recent policies, and in particular the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and benefit cuts, are taking us in the wrong direction. Unless these change, millions more will be forced into insecure and unaffordable private renting or homelessness, as non-market housing alternatives are destroyed.

We call on all politicians seeking our votes to commit themselves to:

- Repeal the Housing and Planning Act 2016
- Stop demolition of council estates
- A national programme of council house building
- Decent, secure homes and rent control for all