



Together we serve the interest of more than a million homes in England

Alok Sharma MP
Minister of State
Department for Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

22 June 2017

Dear Minister

Under normal circumstances we would be writing at this time to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister of State for Housing and offer our help and support in taking forward the housing pledges in your party's manifesto. However, the tragic events at Grenfell Tower and their implications for other tower blocks are obviously commanding our immediate attention, as no doubt they are yours

ARCH represents 64 councils that have chosen to retain ownership of council housing and manage it directly. The National Federation of ALMOs represents 35 Arms-Length Management Organisations managing homes in 38 local authorities. Together we own or manage, working closely with our tenants, more than a million homes in England, many of which are in tower blocks. As you will be aware, our members have been taking urgent action to re-assess fire safety risks in their own stock and respond to residents' concerns. We have sought to help them in this by providing opportunities for information-sharing and discussion of emerging issues. As yet the cause of the Grenfell Tower fire has not been established, nor why it spread so widely, so it is impossible to know exactly what remedial action will be required in other blocks. As matters become clearer we will want to help our members shape appropriate local responses, and to contribute in any way we can to the Government's response to this terrible tragedy. If you feel there are matters we could usefully discuss face to face we would be happy to meet you, or your officials, at any time.

Looking ahead, councils and ALMOs have the ambition and capacity to make a major contribution to meeting your Government's broader housing goals, in particular your manifesto commitment to build a million homes by 2020 and a further 500,000 by 2022. We very much welcome the manifesto's acknowledgement that these targets cannot be met without the active participation of social and municipal housing providers.

Association of Retained Council Housing
4 Riley Court, Millburn Hill Road
University of Warwick Science Park, CV4 7HP
Tel: 024 7647 2711

info@arch-housing.org.uk
www.arch-housing.org.uk
@ARCH_housing
Company Reg. No: 07970258

National Federation of ALMOs
Octavia House, Westwood way
Coventry, Cv4 8JP
Tel: 02476 851729

info@almos.org.uk
www.almos.org.uk
@NFA_ALMOs
Company Reg. No: 6781539

We, and our members, look forward to taking forward with your Department the proposals to increase councils' role in housebuilding included in the recent Housing White Paper, as well as the Council Housing Deals announced in the manifesto.

We enjoyed a productive dialogue with your predecessor Gavin Barwell and very much hope to continue it with you in your new role. Officers from our organisations are meeting with your senior officials again on 30 June to continue the dialogue we had opened up with your predecessor prior to the General Election and at an appropriate time we would like to meet you to discuss how ARCH and the NFA may be of practical support in relation to these commitments.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Clare Salier
Chair
Association of Retained Council Housing
Cabinet Member for Housing
London Borough of Wandsworth

Hugh Broadbent
Chair
National Federation of ALMOs
Chair
Six Towns Housing (Bury)

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