



Clarion Housing summary response to the Social Housing Green Paper

Principle 1: Ensuring homes are safe and decent

The safety of all residents, regardless of tenure, is paramount. We welcome the suggestion that recently introduced safety measures in the private rented sector (such as installation of smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and inspections of electrical systems) be extended to apply to social housing.

We are developing our own 'Clarion Standard', with the aim of bringing the majority of our homes up to this enhanced specification by 2040. We therefore support proposed measures to further drive up the standards of homes. One of the most transformational ways to achieve this is through regeneration which plays an essential role in not only improving standards, but revitalising communities and often providing additional homes.

Principle 2: Effective resolution of complaints

We accept complaints in multiple formats to encourage residents to let us know if something has gone wrong. We are committed to providing a high quality service to all our residents and to ensure that complaints are addressed quickly and fairly.

Having consulted widely with residents on this subject, we propose that the eight week waiting period before escalating to the ombudsman be removed. It is our view that the current designated persons system is ineffectual because residents tend to approach their MP or Councillor outside the formal complaints process.

Principle 3: Empowering residents and strengthening the regulator

We are open to working with government, the regulator, agencies and other housing providers to establish an effective and meaningful reporting mechanism for performance. Clarion contributed to the development of the sector scorecard and we see this as a strong foundation to build on.

Clarion is committed to transparency and we already publish annual reports which provide residents with key information on a wide range of topics; from property development statistics, to financial figures.

We believe that our residents are best placed to judge how well we are performing in their neighbourhoods so we support their view that resident satisfaction should be central to how housing associations are measured.

Principle 4: Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities

Stigma, either felt communally or individually, can arise from many different factors; some that Housing Associations can take practical actions to counter and others that are external to us, such as the media portrayal of social housing.

Stigma starts from a perception that people who live in social housing are somehow different from those in other tenures. Residents told us that one of the primary ways we can help them is to maintain their neighbourhoods and not mark their housing out as different. We invest in making neighbourhoods safe, welcoming and attractive places to live, and we have responded to resident views so we no longer put up signs that identify homes as social housing. On our developments we are also working to ensure the design of new homes does not reinforce different tenure groupings. Clarion provides homes across multiple tenures, but our principles are universal. We treat all residents fairly, irrespectively of the type of home they live in.

Principle 5: Expanding supply and supporting home ownership

We welcome the Prime Minister's pledge of £2 billion of new funding over the next 10 years, which will help us to build the types of affordable homes that are desperately needed by families across the country over the long-term.

Certainty over grant funding gives Clarion flexibility in terms of tenure, particularly in terms of enabling a balance between homes for social rented housing and for low cost homeownership (such as shared ownership) or sale. However we would welcome government intervention on land value capture in respect of large settlement and strategic land where the current system favours housing for sale over community benefit, infrastructure and long term investment.

We welcome the observations of the Letwin review that development can be accelerated by delivering different tenures at different price points, however, mixed tenure and diversity needs to be reflected in the land price and via the planning system.