TENANT COMPLAINTS: GETTING IT RIGHT FIRST TIME

The Communities and Local Government Select Committee's report into the Regulation of Social Housing in England made a recommendation regarding misdirected complaints by tenants to the Homes and Communities Agency. The Committee recommended that the Government, working with the sector, should clearly publicise the correct complaints procedure to avoid this happening in the future.

As you know, in 2011 the Government made a change in the way that social housing tenants could make a complaint against their landlords. For the first time, MPs, Councillors and tenant panels would have a formal statutory role in the complaints process - local problems are best resolved locally by the people who live and work in those neighbourhoods. I am writing to you to let you know what we have done in response to this recommendation.

I am submitting a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament responding to the recommendation, setting out what we have done or are planning to do and reminding my Parliamentary colleagues of their enhanced role in the complaints process. I have also written to the National Housing Federation, the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Local Government Association asking them for their thoughts on how to ensure their members are ensuring the correct complaints process is advertised clearly and any work they have done or plan to do on this important area.

In addition to this, the Homes and Communities Agency's on-line guidance now explains more clearly its role in the complaints process and where and how complaints should be addressed. The Gov.uk service now also has dedicated pages explaining how to make a complaint.

My Ministerial colleague, Stephen Williams MP, has been working with the National Tenant Organisations and others to promote the role that social tenants can play in helping to shape their housing services. He will be writing to landlords shortly to publicise our forthcoming guide 'Tenants Leading Change'. The leaflet explains the role that tenant panels can play and Stephen will be asking landlords to promote and disseminate this to their tenants, and he will also remind landlords of the need to make it clear how their tenants can raise a complaint.