



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Communities and Local Government Select
Committee
House of Commons
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Marcus Jones MP
Minister for Local Government

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Dear Clive,

Homelessness Reduction Act: Secondary Legislation

Following my recent update on the preparations for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, I wanted to provide further information on the Government's plans to make secondary legislation in the New Year ahead of the Act's commencement.

Firstly, regulations are required to set out the procedure to be followed by local housing authorities (LHAs) when issuing notices to applicants who deliberately and unreasonably refuse to cooperate. Following the commitment I made during the passage of the Act, the Government has worked closely with the sector to develop options for these regulations. The regulations will set out that LHAs must have a written procedure for issuing notices of non-cooperation which requires the authorisation by a second officer before a notice is issued to an applicant. In extension to the existing safeguards in the primary legislation, the regulations aim to ensure LHAs do not end their duties without regard to an applicant's individual needs and circumstances.

Secondly, the regulations will specify the public authorities which will be subject to the duty to refer. This list will be wide-ranging and target key public authorities to increase the opportunities for cases to be alerted to LHAs so they can begin working with households earlier. In order to allow LHAs time to implement the Act and set up robust referral arrangements with service partners the duty to refer will come into effect in October 2018.

Finally, the regulations will revise the current review regulations relating to applicants' right to request a review of a LHA's decision. The revised regulations will cover the new reviewable decisions introduced by the prevention and relief duties, to ensure they are also subject to a regulatory process. This will guarantee that there is a clear and transparent procedure to follow if applicants are not satisfied with any decision during their application and that fair representation is always available to them. The revised regulations will also introduce an expedited review for appropriate decisions. The amended timeframe strikes a balance between allowing time for authorities to conduct the review and ensuring there is sufficient time to overturn the original decision so that it has a meaningful impact for the applicant by maximising the opportunity to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

I know that we all share a firm commitment to reducing homelessness through earlier intervention and prevention. The regulations will support the successful implementation of the Act ensuring that more people are supported earlier to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marcus Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "J".

MARCUS JONES MP