



Jo Swinson MP
Leadership Candidate for the Liberal Democrat Party
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

10 July 2019

Dear Ms Swinson,

I am writing to you regarding the vital issue of housing standards in our Private Rented Sector (PRS).

Poor quality housing is responsible for a high proportion of the deaths, injuries and chronic illnesses that impact on life expectancy in the UK. The PRS has higher proportions of substandard housing, yet local authorities have limited knowledge of landlords and the properties in their local areas. There is no statutory requirement for landlords to declare their interests, and rogue landlords exploit this to the detriment of their tenants.

To tackle this worrying situation, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) is asking politicians from across the political spectrum to commit to introducing a new mandatory landlord registration scheme for England, mirroring those already in operation in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Data from the new register would enable more local authorities to engage with landlords, via local landlord forums, to improve landlords' knowledge of safe property conditions, good management practices and their obligations as a landlord.

The new register should be connected with the rogue landlord database and banning orders, ensuring that landlords who have committed serious offences, but are not always known to other local authorities, cannot simply move areas to repeat their practices. A national register would aid the identification of criminal landlords who operate across different areas and prevent them from managing any properties going forward.

Tenants would also be able to check whether the property they are planning to rent is registered, thus helping tenants to make a better decision when choosing a property to rent.

Not only would a register give local authorities a much stronger picture of housing in their areas, but it will leave rogue landlords with nowhere to hide; all while empowering renters to make informed choices about their housing options.

The Government's own commissioned review into selective licensing schemes, published last month, included a recommendation for a new register, and cited widespread support across local authorities and tenant groups.

As a leadership candidate for the Liberal Democrat Party, will you commit your party to introducing this new register and fighting to improve housing conditions in England, should you become leader?

I have attached a copy of our new parliamentary briefing into the need for a national landlord registration scheme, which I hope you find useful.

Thank you very much for your time and we look forward to working with you going forwards.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Godfrey', written in a cursive style.

Anne Godfrey
Chief Executive of CIEH