

Association of Retained Council Housing(ARCH) Tenants' Group

- Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) have now agreed to share the learning from the pilot inspections, and this should be out in the next week or so.
- Claim farmers- the department is now taking this seriously following all examples from the Tenant Group. There is a proper team in place to tackle this issue.
- Concerns about the delays with the Housing Ombudsman Service, in some circumstances residents are waiting for over 12 months. This may make people make different or desperate decisions with claim farmers. HOS has started using social media etc. to publicise their service and advising against going to claim farmers.
- Some residents are going to the elected members, some of whom often don't know their own Council's Complaints Procedure. As part of the Complaint Handling Code authorities should take any complaints (as defined in the code) from elected members and follow the complaints process even if cases where they do not specially ask for this. Authorities should recognise it as one as stated within the code.

GOVERNEMENT POLICY AND LEGISLATION UPDATE

Consultation on Awaab's Law has now closed. Everyone agrees this is a good thing, and Damp, Mould and Condensation (DMC) needs to be dealt with however the government also added in the Housing Health and Safety Rating that also needs to be done under the same timescales as the DMC. This is unrealistic. In the consultation they also said they did an economic assessment and that it wouldn't cost any more money to authorities. However, given the timescales required and that most authorities are already 'in contract' for this work it will likely mean additional cost to speed things up. Particularly when timescales are calendar days not working day and therefore contractors will be asked to work over weekend which up to now would usually be outside the scope of the contract. It will be challenging.

ARCH CONFERENCE UPDATE

The conference will take place on the 3rd October 2024 in Rotherham. ARCH members are assigned 5 free places(preference for ratio of more residents to officers)

RIGHT TO BUY

Interesting discussion on merits of Right to Buy (RTB). Generally conflicting views on the pros & cons.

AOB AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wandsworth has won London borough of culture for next year.

Next meeting is 22nd April 2024 10-12pm.