



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

*Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities*

Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities**

4th Floor, Fry Building

2 Marsham Street

London SW1P 4DF

Cllr Georgia Gould
London Borough of Camden Council
Camden Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

16 August 2023

Via email only.

Dear Cllr Gould,

I write following the issuing of a regulatory notice by the Regulator of Social Housing to Camden Council for your failure to meet the Home Standard.

I have been clear that social housing must be safe and decent, and provide those living there with security and dignity. Residents should be treated fairly and with respect. And if things go wrong, there should be a swift and effective means of redress. It is clear this has not always been the case for your tenants.

The Regulator's investigation has found the Council to be non-compliant with the Home Standard due to fire safety failures across thousands of your homes. These include more than 9,000 overdue fire remedial actions, with 400 of these being high-risk actions that should have been completed within no more than 30 days in the majority of cases. To compound this, the Regulator found that there were more than 9,000 properties which did not have a hard-wired smoke alarm installed, and just under 4,000 properties without a carbon monoxide detector.

It is extremely concerning that so many of your tenants were put at risk in such a way, and I have no doubt that these findings will have caused them much anxiety, stress, and frustration. I myself am profoundly troubled by these failings given that Camden Council pleaded guilty to two offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 earlier this year, in proceedings related to the tragic death of a tenant in November 2017 after a fire at an address in Hampstead. It is clear that you have continued to expose your tenants to serious potential harm from fire. This is a shocking situation.

Every single person in this country deserves to live in a home that is decent, safe and secure. Your properties should meet the standards expected and you must meet your obligations to your tenants. Your management of thousands of your homes has fallen below these standards, and I am deeply shocked by the gravity and sheer multitude of failings in this case.

This Government has been clear that social housing residents must be able to put their trust in their landlords to provide a decent and safe home. The health and safety of tenants should be paramount.

The Social Housing Regulation Act will bring in a tough new regulatory regime to support this Government's commitment to driving up standards and holding landlords to account for providing social housing residents with decent homes.

I expect Camden Council to take urgent action to address these failings, and the Regulator has also made this clear. I know that you have started to put a programme in place to rectify the issues, which the Regulator will be monitoring closely. I expect overdue fire remedial actions to be completed as soon as possible, with necessary improvements to your processes to be made swiftly to ensure these failures are not repeated again. I will be taking a personal interest in how your organisation continues to deliver its responsibilities to its residents. My officials will be in touch to arrange for you to meet with the Minister for Local Government and Building Safety to discuss these failings.

I am copying this letter to the CEO of the Regulator, Fiona MacGregor, and to Sir Keir Starmer and Tulip Siddiq MP.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'e'.

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations