



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
*Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing
and Communities*
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Tom Horwood
Chief Executive, Waverley Borough Council
The Burys
Godalming
Surrey
GU7 1HR

4 September 2023

Dear Tom,

I write following a finding of severe maladministration by the Housing Ombudsman for your organisation's delay in installing disability adaptations.

In this case, the resident, whose son has cerebral palsy, was left waiting for eighteen months for adaptations to be made to his home to make it suitable for his needs.

The Ombudsman found unreasonable delays and poor communication throughout. It took five months from when the resident confirmed that he wished the adaptations to be carried out for you to confirm that specialist contractors would be needed, and a further six months to obtain quotes. The cost of the works was found to be more than permitted, and it took you a further two months to make a site visit to assess the work to be done by your own contractors. There was then a further two months before you ordered the work to be done.

More delays followed, resulting in an eighteen-month period from when the resident first confirmed he wished the works to be done, at which point the resident carried out the works himself. Your communication with the resident was also poor and would have left him feeling let down and ignored.

You failed to take account of how important the work was to this family. This is deeply disappointing. When your residents report an issue, it should be acted upon swiftly and effectively. You must consider vulnerabilities of residents and take necessary steps to meet requirements in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010.

I have been clear that social housing residents must be able to put their trust in their landlords to provide a decent home and deal with complaints effectively. The Social Housing Regulation Act is bringing in a tough new regulatory regime to support this Government's commitment to driving up standards and holding landlords accountable for providing social housing residents with decent homes.

I expect the changes you are implementing to make a significant difference to the service you deliver to your residents. I will be taking a personal interest in how your organisation continues to deliver its responsibilities.

I am copying this letter to the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Angela Richardson MP, Councillor Paul Fellows, Councillor Peter Martin, the Select Committee for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Housing Ombudsman.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'M' at the beginning.

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities
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