



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Stuart Love
Chief Executive
Westminster City Council
Westminster City Hall
64 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 6QP

Via email only

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

16 August 2023

Dear Stuart

I write following a finding of severe maladministration by the Housing Ombudsman. This was for your failure to address issues of damp and mould in one of your resident's homes for over two years. You did this while knowing that there was also a four-month-old child living in the property. Despite a survey report finding significant signs of rising damp, you failed to offer a decant until four months later and even then, informed the tenant that a decant would only be considered after a further inspection. Eight months later you told the resident a decant was not an option, and then took a further five months to carry out another survey.

You failed to produce evidence that you had considered the vulnerabilities of the residents, nor the impact to their health and wellbeing. Two years later some of the issues were still outstanding. It is unacceptable that your residents should wait for this length of time to have issues such as this addressed – especially with a young child involved. Residents should expect that when they report an issue, it will be acted upon swiftly and effectively, not months and not years later.

This Government has 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 2023 has brought in a 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 understand that you have now made changes to your procedures for supporting residents, including 'vulnerability training' for staff. I will take a personal interest in how your organisation continues to deliver its responsibilities to its residents.

I am copying this letter to Nickie Aiken MP, Karen Buck MP, Councillor Adam Hug, Councillor Rachael Robathan, 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, slightly slanted style.

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