



# 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

Cath Farrell  
Interim Chief Executive, Six Town Housing  
6 Knowsley Place  
Angouleme Place  
Bury  
BL9 0EL

4 September 2023

Dear Cath,

I write following a finding of severe maladministration by the Housing Ombudsman, for your lack of professionalism in responding to a resident's complaints about noise.

In this case, you failed to acknowledge or act for nearly two years after the resident first complained. The extent of the issue was clear, with the resident having completed sixteen diary sheets in one month alone; records that you never reviewed. Unsurprisingly, the issue had a serious impact on your resident's mental health, which deteriorated to the extent that she became unable to continue to record the incidents.

You chose not to respond to her and when you did eventually acknowledge the complaints, internal communications contained wholly inappropriate remarks. Not only did you fail to consider the detrimental impact this had upon her, you also failed to consider reasonable adjustments. Your record keeping was poor, and you failed to follow your own ASB policy and procedure. This is not acceptable.

When your residents report an issue, it should be acted upon swiftly and effectively. 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. We are also introducing new regulatory standards relating to the competence and conduct of social housing staff which will require all staff to have the skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver a professional service to residents.

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

I am copying this letter to James Daly MP, Christian Wakeford MP, the Chief Executive of Bury Council Lynne Ridsdale, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, Councillor Russell Bernstein, 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 initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'e'.

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**  
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