



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

2 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DF

Geeta Nanda, OBE

CEO

Metropolitan Thames Valley

The Johnston Building

77 Hatton Garden

Holborn

London

EC1N 8JS

Our reference: MC2023/05236

8 December 2023

Dear Ms Nanda,

I write again following a further two findings of severe maladministration by the Housing Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman's report identifies failings in your response to a vulnerable resident's complaint about pests. Disappointingly, this case has similarities to a previous finding relating to pest control about which I wrote to you last year.

There were significant failures and prolonged delays in the way you responded to this resident's needs. The resident first complained about a leak, which was escalated to stage two after failing to respond at stage one. It then took you 20 months to issue a stage three response.

You missed numerous chances to put things right. The resident was left with an infestation of mice nesting in her furniture that caused damage to items belonging to her late daughter. The delays in your response caused your resident significant distress, anxiety, and inconvenience. You failed to deal with this issue with any sense of urgency or empathy for the upset this caused. A year later, despite contractors having made inspections of the property, you had still failed to complete the necessary work. This is unacceptable.

Following previous findings by the Ombudsman, you committed to make improvements to your complaints handling processes and you have now reviewed your pest control policy. Given your repeated failings, I remain very concerned – you must improve the quality of service you deliver.

Everyone should be able to live in a decent home and have their complaints taken seriously. Residents should be treated with respect and courtesy by their landlord and their health and safety should be paramount. This Government expects social landlords to intensify their efforts to provide the high-quality social housing that residents deserve.

I am copying this letter to Florence Eshalomi MP, Helen Hayes MP, Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP and Councillors Claire Holland, and Donna Harris. I am also copying to the Select Committee for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Housing Ombudsman.

Yours,

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 underline.

RT HON MICHAEL GOVE MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations