

# **Understanding Government's Attitudes to Social Housing through the Application of Politeness Theory**

## **Abstract**

This paper gives a brief background of housing policy in England from the 2010 general election where David Cameron was appointed Prime Minister of a Coalition government with the Liberal Democrats and throughout the years that followed. The study looks at government attitudes towards social housing from 2015, where David Cameron had just become Prime Minister of an entirely Conservative Government, to 2018 following important events such as Brexit and the tragic Grenfell Tower fire. Through the application of politeness theory, as originally put forward by Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987), the study analysis the speeches of key ministers to the National Housing Summit and suggests that the use of positive and negative politeness strategies could give an idea as to the true attitudes of government.

**Word Count: 5472**

**Emily Pumford**

**[emily.pumford@riverside.org.uk](mailto:emily.pumford@riverside.org.uk)**

**Job Title: Researcher**

**Organisation: The Riverside Group**

**Current research experience: 3 years**

## **Understanding Government's Attitudes to Social Housing through the Application of Politeness Theory**

### **Introduction and Background**

For years, the Conservative Party have prided themselves on their support for home ownership. From Margaret Thatcher proudly proclaiming that they had taken the 'biggest single step towards a home-owning democracy ever' (Conservative Manifest 1983), David Cameron arguing that they would become 'once again, the party of home ownership in our country' (Conservative Party Conference Speech 2014) and Theresa May, as recently as 2017, declaring that they would 'make the British Dream a reality by reigniting home ownership in Britain' (Conservative Party Conference Speech 2017).

Their policies under David Cameron, first as leader of a Coalition government alongside the Liberal Democrats between 2010 and 2015 and subsequently as Prime Minister of an entirely Conservative government from 2015 to 2016, made it clear that home ownership was a high priority. In the Coalition's 2011 Autumn Statement given by Chancellor George Osborne, they announced the reinvigoration of the Right to Buy (where by council housing tenants are able to buy their home at a discounted rate), describing it is 'one of the greatest social policies of all time'. They also announced plans for the introduction of mortgage indemnities for 95% loan to value mortgages on new build homes. By their 2015 election manifesto and consequently their 2015 Summer Budget, plans for Right to Buy had grown from reinvigorating the original scheme to extending it to housing association tenants. In the 2015 Autumn Statement, they announced intentions to build 400,000 affordable new homes by the end of the decade. This was followed by the clarification that 'affordable means not just affordable to rent, but affordable to buy' and included almost 200,000 Starter Homes to be sold at 20% of market value to first-time buyers and 135,000 Help to Buy: Shared Ownership homes.

Whilst their support for home ownership at this time was unquestionable, their attitude toward social housing and those living in social housing was much less positive. In the 2011 ‘Housing Strategy for England’ issued by the Coalition government, it was argued that social housing was ‘not working’, was ‘used inefficiently’ and did not provide ‘the right support and incentives to take up work’ (2011:21). In order to tackle these supposed inefficiencies, the Localism Act 2011 was introduced with terms allowing the prevention of ‘people who have no need of social housing from joining the waiting list’ and scrapping the offer of lifetime tenancies to make way for ‘more flexible arrangements for people entering social housing in the future’ amongst others (Department for Communities and Local Government 2011:15). The 2015 Summer Budget announced key austerity measures the Government intended to introduce, including: a reduction in the benefit cap from £26,000 to £23,000 in London and £20,000 in the rest of England, removal of housing benefits for 18-21 year olds, a freeze on working age benefits including the Local Housing Allowance, a reduction in social housing rents by 1% a year and a requirement for those ‘on higher incomes living in social housing to pay rents at the market rate’.

In the years since 2015, two key events have played a huge part in how the government have tackled issues around housing.

The first of these events was Brexit: the UK vote to leave the European Union on 23 June 2016. This vote had important ramifications for housing for various reasons. The UK was already in the midst of a housing crisis with rising housing costs for both home owners and renters, fewer people able to afford to buy a house, more people on social housing waiting lists, more people living in unsecure private rental accommodation and growing numbers of homeless people. Brexit, at least initially, led to great uncertainty and to the resignation of David Cameron, a Prime Minister known to be pro-home ownership.

The second event was the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy. On 14 June 2017, 72 people were killed in the fire in a tower block in North Kensington, London. The tower block was managed on behalf of Kensington and Chelsea London Borough Council by Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO). Since Kensington and Chelsea is one of the wealthiest local authorities in the country, the fire has been responsible for highlighting the inequalities in the borough, with recent research stating that ‘it has areas of both great

affluence and of poverty: income inequality is higher here than in any other borough by a considerable margin' (Trust for London). Despite the initial cause of the fire being recognised as a faulty refrigerator, the fire spread so quickly due to problems with the type of cladding and insulation used on the building, insufficient cavity barriers and the lack of sprinklers in the building (amongst other reasons). The Local Authority and wider government gained criticism in the wake of the fire, with local residents describing how they had previously tried to warn of the risk of fire and some blaming spending cuts.

If there is to be a positive outcome from Grenfell, it is the shift in focus back to social housing, but more importantly to the people who live in social housing. As discussed in the UK Housing Review 2018, stereotypical views of social housing tenants as being 'typically unemployed' (2018:38) began to be questioned following the fire and the recent Social Housing Green Paper, released in August 2018, addresses the need for 'a renewed pride in social housing' (2018:1).

This study will aim to address whether government attitudes to social housing have truly begun to shift following the events highlighted above. Finlayson & Martin (2008:3) state that 'political speeches are a good source for those wishing to understand the ideas and outlooks of politicians: their beliefs and ideologies'. Therefore, the study will consist of an analysis of speeches made by key ministers at the National Housing Federation (NHF) Summit from 2015 to 2018 and in particular how the use of different politeness strategies might represent a change in attitude. The speeches will be analysed alongside the context of housing policies throughout the years.

### **What are '*Politeness Strategies*'?**

Spencer-Oatey suggests that the term politeness is 'particularly confusing' as in everyday-life it is interpreted 'as referring to the use of relatively formal' language (2008:2) whereas traditional politeness theory instead looks at 'the maintenance and/or promotion of harmonious interpersonal relations' (2008:3).

Within linguistics, politeness has been studied in relation to various different fields, including: gender (e.g. Mills 2002, Mills 2003 & Mullany 2006), online social interaction (e.g. Westbrook 2007 & Burke & Kraut 2008), culture (e.g. Holtgraves & Joong-Nam 1990,

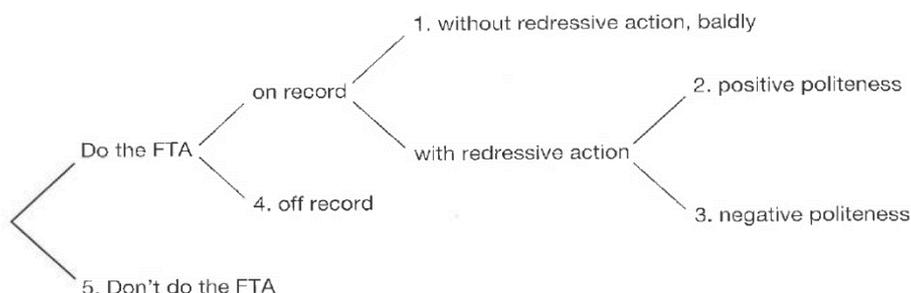
Ji 2000 & Spencer-Oatey 2008) and politics (e.g. Harris 2001, Chilton 2004 & Crespo-Fernández 2014).

Most studies of politeness are based largely on the theory put forward by Brown & Levinson in their work *'Politeness: Some universals in language usage'* (1978, 1987).

Brown & Levinson's theory is based on the notion of 'face', a concept derived and adapted from earlier work by Goffman (1967) and from 'the English folk term, which ties face up with notions of being embarrassed or humiliated, or 'losing face' (1987:311). They argue that each person has both negative 'face' wants, 'that his actions be unimpeded by others' and positive 'face' wants 'that his wants be desirable to at least some others' (1987:312). Chilton further clarifies the notions of positive and negative face by stating that 'positive face is effectively a behavioural orientation to the self as desiring to be included in the same 'space' as other members of the group' and 'negative face is effectively an orientation to one's own autonomy' and 'their right to freedom of action and to freedom of intrusion' (2004:40).

Fraser (1990:229) argues that 'face is something that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and any threat must be continually monitored during an interaction'. Furthermore, 'since face is so vulnerable, and since most participants will defend their face if threatened, the assumption is made that it is in everyone's best interest to maintain each other's face' (1990:229). However, as stated by Brown & Levinson, certain speech acts 'intrinsically threaten face' as they 'by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or the speaker' (1987:313). These are known as 'face-threatening acts' (FTAs). For example, making threats or giving orders may threaten the hearer's negative face as their freedom is being impeded upon. On the other hand, insulting the hearer may challenge their positive face and their need to be liked and included. Certain speech acts may also threaten the speakers face, for example making an apology may damage the speaker's positive face as they may be admitting to previous wrongdoing.

In order to mitigate these face threatening acts, a speaker may use certain 'politeness strategies' as evidenced in the following diagram from Brown & Levinson:



To carry out a FTA on-record is to make clear the reason for carrying out the act, by contrast to carry out a FTA off-record is to do so more ambiguously, making it 'impossible to attribute one clear communicative intention to what the speaker says' (Morand 1996:545). Holtgraves (1997:224) argues that 'off-record politeness is a clear instance of indirect speech; a threatening act is performed in such a way that more than one interpretation of the remark is possible'. Where an act is carried out baldly, without redress (attempts to counteract the threatening action), this is to do so 'in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible (for example, for a request, saying 'Do X!')' (Brown & Levinson 1987: 316).

Redressive action, as shown in the diagram, is carried out by positive and negative politeness strategies. Positive politeness is described by Morand as 'insinuating or establishing a sense of commonality and familiarity between speaker and hearer', (1996:546) 'invoking a claim of solidarity between speaker and hearer through gestures that indicate common interests, attitudes or mindsets' (1996:547). Examples of positive politeness strategies include the use of inclusive forms, such as 'we' and the expression of common interests (Brown & Levinson 1987:322, Morand 1996:548).

By contrast, 'negative politeness tactics work by recognising or establishing social distance between speaker and hearer' (Morand 1996:546) and are 'essentially avoidance based' (Brown & Levinson 1987:317). Negative politeness strategies include 'impersonalising the speaker and hearer by avoiding pronouns "I" and "you"' and using indirect tactics such as questions or 'hedges, words or phrases that diminish the force of a speech act' (Morand 1996:547).

Some scholars have criticised Brown & Levinson's theory, with Fraser & Nolen (1981:96) stating that 'no statement is inherently polite or impolite' and Mao (1994:452) arguing that as they are 'yet to address discourse behaviours in other non-Western cultures,' their argument

for a ‘face-saving’ model’ has been undermined. However, Brown (2015) reasons that ‘despite its shortcomings, the B&L model retains its hold on research on politeness largely because it provides a coherent set of concepts for analytically dissecting polite speech in different societies and contexts’ (Brown 2015:329) and Chandra & Sari (2018:117) state that it is still considered ‘the most influential theory of politeness’.

### **Politeness in Political Speech**

‘The doing of politics is predominantly constituted in language’ (Chilton 2004:6). This statement is echoed by Crespo-Fernández who states that ‘language is a vital element in the daily life of politicians’ (2014:5).

There is a large body of work on the language of politics and political rhetoric (e.g. Reicher & Hopkins 1996, Schäffner 1997, Krebs & Jackson 2007, Charteris-Black 2013) and more specifically research has been carried out by various scholars into the importance of politeness in political discourse (e.g. Chilton 1990, Bull 2008, Bull & Fetzer 2010, Bull & Fetzer 2012). This is unsurprising as Crespo-Fernández (2014:6) argues that ‘political language is by definition ‘polite’ language use’ and that within political speeches, ‘it is the convention to appear polite and sensitive to people’s concerns while, at the same time, to try to win their favour or attack a political opponent’. Furthermore, Crespo-Fernández states, ‘political actors tend to avoid words or expressions that may have unpleasant associations in order not to give a negative impression to their audiences’ (2014:6). Chilton (2004:40) also makes this point by stating that ‘a politician will have to address negative face risks – this motivation will be matched by verbal behaviour of particular kinds – simply not referring to threatening referents for example, or referring to them obliquely or through euphemism’.

Considering that ‘negative politeness works by recognising or establishing social distance’ (Morand 1996:546) and positive politeness indicates that in some respects the speaker and the hearer want the same things (Brown & Levinson 1987:317), it is worth specifically looking at how the use of politeness strategies by politicians may be suggestive of their current attitudes towards a group of people or a particular policy. For example, politicians’ use of politeness strategies may serve to either create social distance between themselves and a particular group of people whilst remaining polite in order to “save face” or may serve as a tactic to align themselves with certain ideologies or groups of people.

## **Analysis of Politeness Strategies**

In order to address the aims of this study, four speeches from key housing ministers to the National Housing Federation (NHF) summit will be analysed. These include:

- 2015 speech given by Greg Clark who was at the time Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Appendix 1)
- 2016 speech given by Gavin Barwell who was at the time Minister of State for Housing and Planning (Appendix 2)
- 2017 speech given by Sajid Javid who was at the time Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Appendix 3)
- 2018 speech given by Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (Appendix 4)

These speeches were chosen in particular for three reasons:

- 1) The date they were given; the first was given in 2015, prior to the events of Brexit and the Grenfell Tower fire and the final speech was given just weeks before the submission of this paper and therefore two years on from Brexit and a year on from the Grenfell Tower fire
- 2) The importance of the ministers giving the speeches to the wider context of housing policy within the UK
- 3) The primary audience for the speeches; the NHF National Housing Summit is organised for ‘senior housing professionals’ and ‘attended by hundreds of housing association colleagues, stakeholders and industry experts’ who are all, therefore, likely to have a key interest in government’s attitudes towards social housing (National Housing Summit 2018)

Qualitative analysis was carried out on the speeches in order to establish, first of all, where a face threatening act occurred towards the hearer and secondly, what kind of politeness strategies were used by the speaker in order to avoid damaging the “face” of the hearer. For the sake of the analysis and in order to address the aims of the study, the audience of housing

association professionals at the National Housing Summit will at times be viewed as representative of the social housing sector.

Once politeness strategies had been identified within the speeches, another layer of analysis was carried out with regard to the housing policies of government at the time the speech was given. This contextualisation is essential to the analysis in order to gain a fuller understanding into government policies and how these may or may not be reflected in the language used and attitudes of key ministers.

### *Hypothesis*

I expect that analysis will show that within earlier speeches, negative politeness strategies are used when addressing the NHF in relation to social housing in order to create distance and avoid difficult topics.

I also hypothesise that later speeches will use more positive politeness strategies, both in discussing social housing and in discussing home ownership.

### *Analysis*

Greg Clark begins his 2015 speech (Appendix 1) with no real greeting, but he does attempt to establish common ground with the audience quickly by using positive politeness strategies in order to retain his own positive face. The strategies used in this case all attempt to establish common ground between the speaker and the hearer. For example, Clark begins his speech with a rhetorical question “If we think about housing and ask ourselves the fundamental questions, what do people really want?”. He then makes a presupposition that the response of everyone in the room would agree with his answer “food, a home, warmth and love” (line 6). He also goes onto use other positive politeness strategies within the beginning of his speech including the use of inclusive pronouns as in “almost all of us” and recognising the wants/needs of the audience by stating “I, just like you, am so determined to build more and better homes” (line 34).

However, the priority of this study is to look at face-threatening acts towards the hearer. It is perhaps important here to point out that within Greg Clark’s speech, social housing is not directly referenced once. Furthermore, Clark seems to purposefully distance himself from housing associations at many times throughout the speech. For example, between lines 92

and 102, Clark uses various negative politeness strategies such as the avoidance of pronouns “I” and “you”, instead referring to the “housing association sector” and more simply the “sector” throughout. The use of hedges as an ‘expression of tentativeness’ (Hyland 1996:433) is also prevalent by using modal verbs such as “might not” and “we should look elsewhere”. Furthermore, the passage, on the whole, can be described as using “off-record” politeness strategies. In some places, the passage can be seen as insulting through statements such as “the housing association sector has taken us so far but might not be the right partner for the future” (line 87). However, Clark is careful to ensure that he cannot be held accountable for the insult and instead it is the view of “some” people. Between lines 103 and 115, Clark continues to refer to the hearer indirectly and speak off-record of “another view” despite the fact he is offering a more complimentary view. Therefore, this passage on the whole suggests that Clark is creating distance from the hearer.

Clark does again move on to use positive politeness strategies. For example, in lines 121-123 Clark moves back to using the more personal pronoun “you” to address the hearer when offering approval over their house building achievements and contribution to building shared ownership homes. In line 178, Clark once again attempts to establish common ground by stating “as most of us know”. However, it is important to recognise that positive politeness strategies within this speech are almost entirely used when addressing the topic of home ownership. This is not a surprise; Conservative housing policy in 2015, as discussed, was almost entirely focused on home ownership. The speech itself is largely being used to promote the extension of the Right to Buy to housing associations and therefore Clark uses positive politeness strategies to suggest that both government and the housing association sector should want the same deal for the Right to Buy and negative politeness strategies to create distance between himself and the possibility that “the sector’s heart is in developing properties for rent”.

Gavin Barwell, who was perceived by the sector to be more pragmatic and understanding of the needs of the sector than previous housing ministers (Inside Housing 2017), gave his 2016 speech to the National Housing Summit just months after the Brexit vote and the appointment of Theresa May as leader of the Conservative government. Similarly to Greg Clark in his 2015 speech, Barwell uses positive politeness strategies such as intensifying his interest in the audience through phrases like “it’s a pleasure to be with you today” (line 6) and “I am

very conscious, from my work as a constituency MP, of the vital role housing associations play in meeting housing need” (lines 7-8) in order to maintain his own positive face needs.

This speech, following on from Greg Clark’s in 2015, came almost a year after the Voluntary Right to Buy deal had been agreed and home ownership is openly referred to as a “dream” for tenants, both in line 37 and in line 53. Whilst the Right the Buy deal had to be backed by housing associations in order to be agreed, only 55% of associations did agree (The Guardian 2015). Therefore, referring to home ownership as a “dream” for tenants is potentially a face-threatening act in itself as it raises a particularly divisive topic. Positive politeness strategies are once again used when discussing details of the Right to Buy. In line 44, for example, Barwell shows that he is understanding of the audience and attending to their needs by stating “I know you’re waiting for the details of when and how the deal will be rolled out.”

However, once again social housing is scarcely referenced within the speech and rather Barwell discusses “affordable homes”. Whilst social housing does fall under the umbrella term of “affordable housing”, the use of the term within Barwell’s speech can be seen to be a form of politeness strategy in itself. As previously mentioned, David Cameron and George Osborne had clarified in 2015 that ‘affordable means not just affordable to rent, but affordable to buy’. Furthermore, within this speech to the NHF Barwell talks about the “largest affordable housing programme for 40 years”, referring to the ‘Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme’ announced in April 2016. Therefore, the term affordable within this speech seems to be used at times as a form of a euphemism for home ownership. The pressure being put on housing associations to build homes for ownership at this time was likely to have made the topic offensive to some people within the audience. The concept of euphemism as a politeness strategy has been discussed, with Chilton (2004:40) stating that ‘euphemising strategies’ are a known practice in political talk and Crespo-Fernández (2005:80) arguing that ‘the indirectness provided by euphemism, in turn, contributes to avoid offence and insure politeness in its double dimension’. That is, both as a positive politeness strategy, oriented towards the self-image of the audience (by not actively discounting the importance of social housing) and as a negative politeness strategy (by avoiding the direct topic of social housing).

In the one instance where Barwell refers to “social rented sectors” (line 106), he again uses negative politeness strategies by being pessimistic and stating the FTA, the suggestion that competition for tenancies will become more intense, as a general rule.

By the end of his speech Barwell has reverted back to key positive politeness strategies. Where he addresses the “challenges of the job” in line 221 this could be potentially face-threatening to the hearer. However, he goes on to seek agreement from the audience with “I look to you as key allies” a sentiment that he echoes across several statements in lines 222 to 225. It may be important, though, to note that whilst there is again a direct reference to ownership within these statements, there is no direct reference to social housing.

Sajid Javid’s speech in 2017 (Appendix 3) took place following the events of the Grenfell Tower fire. Javid, as with the previous speeches, uses positive politeness strategies to introduce his speech. The main difference in this speech is that Javid possibly takes it a step further, by not only using personal pronouns, but by addressing the Chief Executive of the NHF by his first name (line 5), which Morand suggests ‘insinuates familiarity’ (1996:548). Furthermore, in order to assert common ground Javid highlights his particular interest in and knowledge of the location of the conference (lines 3-28) and shares personal stories from his background (lines 49-58).

Javid’s is the first speech to make reference to social housing on more than one occasion and moreover, in doing so he uses various positive politeness strategies. For example, in line 71 Javid aligns himself with housing associations and social landlords by stating that “there’s been some unfair criticism of social landlords generally”, going on to give reasons for why he knows that to be the case as “everyone in this room is passionate about what they do” (line 72) and asserting the fact that both parties are on the same page by stating “I know that and you know that” (line 74). Furthermore, throughout the speech, Javid uses inclusive forms such as “we” as in line 81; “it’s clear that we need a fundamental rethink of social housing in this country”, line 132; “what more can we do to tackle homelessness?” and repeatedly from line 249 to 252; “we need to shift the whole conversation about social housing”, “we need to challenge outdated, unfair attitudes”, “we need to return to the time, not so very long ago, when social housing was valued”. The use of such forms is a common aspect of positive politeness strategies, with Morand arguing that the inclusive form ‘we’ ‘places speaker and

hearer in the same role, thereby suggesting they share similar outlooks and responsibilities (1996: 547). Furthermore, in Chilton's more recent work, he states that 'the repeated use of the first-person plural inclusive pronoun' is a classic example of addressing 'positive face – appealing to patriotism, to pulling together' (2004:40).

Whilst it is unsurprising that government would be more open to working alongside housing associations and social housing landlords following the Grenfell Tower fire, the context of housing policy during the time suggests that there are even wider issues at play. Between the previous speech, given by Gavin Barwell in 2016 and the speech by Sajid Javid in 2017, the Conservative government had u-turned on several of their key policies. For example, the requirement for those on higher incomes to pay market rent for their social housing property (Pay to Stay) was scrapped in November 2016, shortly after Barwell's speech. Inside Housing reported that it had come in for 'wide criticism, with warnings it would drive middle earners out of high-value areas, would be a huge administrative burden to manage and would be a perverse incentive against getting a better paid job' (Inside Housing 2018). The plan to build 200,000 starter homes as 'affordable housing', as outlined in the Conservative's 2015 election manifesto, was also scrapped in the Government's 2017 housing White Paper although this was replaced with other different plans to create affordable homeownership.

Following on from this and in the lead up to Theresa May's NHF speech in 2018, further policies introduced by David Cameron were scrapped. These include the plans for social housing benefits to be capped at Local Housing Allowance rates, which Theresa May announced would be scrapped in October 2017, removal of housing benefit for under-21s which was scrapped in March 2018 and the phased removal of lifetime tenancies which was scrapped in August 2018. The removal of the policy for LHA caps was seen by campaigners as a victory for social housing and is arguably a key factor in suggesting that government's attitudes towards social housing may have changed. Furthermore, May's speech came just weeks after the release of the Social Housing Green Paper '*A New Deal for Social Housing*' which Javid had described in his speech as a "wide-ranging, top-to-bottom review of the issues facing the sector" (line 87) and was partially in response to the issues highlighted by the Grenfell Tower fire.

Theresa May references the Green Paper (Appendix 4, line 61) and the LHA cap u-turn in her 2017 NHF speech (lines 100-102), using positive politeness strategies to highlight the fact that she is attending to the needs of housing associations. This kind of strategy is used not only with regard to the LHA caps, but repeatedly from line 97 to line 119, e.g. “you said that to plan ahead and secure future investment, you needed long-term certainty on rents, we have given you that long-term certainty.’ May also uses other positive politeness strategies throughout her speech. Similarly to Javid, May uses the first-person plural inclusive pronoun ‘we’ as in lines 34, 36 and later in her speech in line 86 where she states “it is a challenge we must rise to together”. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, May uses positive politeness strategies in the form of ‘offers’ and ‘promises’ as she announces more funding for social housing from line 108; “today, I can announce that new longer-term partnerships will be opened up to the most ambitious housing associations through a ground-breaking £2 billion initiative”. May’s announcement received a partial standing ovation from the audience with sector leader’s praising its significance (Inside Housing 2018).

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Within this study, I have adapted theories from key politeness studies in the field of linguistics (notably Brown & Levinson’s 1987 politeness theory) in order to analyse the speeches made by government ministers to housing association professionals and stakeholders at the National Housing Summit between 2015 and 2018. The aim of my study was to gain a better understanding as to whether there has been a recognised shift in the attitudes of government towards social housing.

The analysis I have carried out of the speeches, alongside the key contextual evidence, addresses this aim. The data suggests that government attitudes towards social housing do seem to have shifted. I expected that following the Grenfell Tower fire, government would be more willing to align themselves to the values of social housing, but would still overwhelmingly argue for the British public having dreams and aspirations of home ownership. The analysis shows that within Greg Clark’s speech he was quite clearly creating a social distance between himself, housing associations and their commitment to providing homes available for rent. By contrast, when addressing the matter of home ownership, Clark uses far more positive politeness strategies in order to assert common ground. Even by

Gavin Barwell's 2016 speech attitudes seem to have shifted slightly, with the use of affordable housing as a euphemism for home ownership. Whilst many government policies at the time were still pushing home ownership at the expense of social housing, the choice by government to use the term 'affordable' in this speech suggests that they were at least not directly excluding social housing and the likely views of the audience.

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, attitudes towards social housing and the audience at the NHF conference seem to be far more positive, with both Sajid Javid and Theresa May using many positive politeness strategies such as going out of their way to address key members of the audience by their first name (e.g. David Orr in Javid's speech and David Orr and Kate Henderson – the incoming NHF Chief Executive - in May's speech) and seeking to find common ground through the use of more personal language.

Whilst these are some key conclusions, I think it is also important to recognise the limitations of the study. In studying the use of politeness theories in relation to the attitudes on show during political speeches I have done something which has not to my knowledge been done previously. Therefore, I recognise that the application of the theories may be unconventional and slightly simplistic. Despite this, I feel that this study highlights the possibilities for future research to look at the way in which politeness theory and other key linguistic strategies can give greater insight into the more personally held attitudes of government aside from the official lines they use and aside from the policies they introduce. Future work identifying the way different political parties use their language to convey potentially different attitudes would also be of interest.

From the speeches analysed, whilst it is possible to see a shift in government's attitudes towards social housing, it is not possible to assess how this fits in with government's plans for home ownership. It is important to recognise that Theresa May's speech was the first time a Prime Minister had spoken at the NHF summit. Furthermore, the fact that home ownership is mentioned just once in Theresa May's speech and there is no reference to the ideology that tenants' long term dreams are to own their own home or in fact to the Right to Buy policy perhaps speaks volumes in itself. However, the recent Social Housing Green Paper, which May refers to in line 67 of her speech, states that:

“Social housing provides a stable base that supports people when they need it. But our social housing offer must also be one that supports social mobility – not one that provides a barrier to aspirations. Around two thirds of social tenants would prefer to be home owners given a free choice. This is not surprising” (Social Housing Green Paper 2018:57).

Therefore, although there has been some shift in government attitudes towards social housing, if they are truly intent on inspiring a renewed pride in social housing there is still a way to go. Comparing social housing unfavourably to home ownership in a document meant as a landmark opportunity for social housing and social housing tenants is not the way to do it.

## References

- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1978). Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena. In *Questions and politeness: Strategies in social interaction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P. (2015). Politeness and language. In *The International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences (IESBS), (2nd ed.)* (326-330). Elsevier.
- Bull, P. (2008). "Slipperiness, Evasion, and Ambiguity" Equivocation and Facework in Noncommittal Political Discourse. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 27(4), 333-344.
- Bull, P., & Fetzer, A. (2010). Face, facework and political discourse. *Revue internationale de psychologie sociale*, 23(2), 155-185.
- Burke, M., & Kraut, R. (2008r). Mind your Ps and Qs: the impact of politeness and rudeness in online communities. In *Proceedings of the 2008 ACM conference on Computer supported cooperative work* (pp. 281-284). ACM.
- Charteris-Black, J. (2013). *Analysing political speeches: Rhetoric, discourse and metaphor*. Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Chilton, P. (1990). Politeness, politics and diplomacy. *Discourse & Society*, 1(2), 201-224.
- Chilton, P. (2004). *Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Crespo Fernández, E. (2005). Euphemistic strategies in politeness and face concerns.
- Crespo Fernández, E. (2014). Euphemism and political discourse in the British regional press.
- Stephens, M. et al (2018). *UK housing review*. Coventry: Chartered Institute of Housing.
- Fetzer, A., & Bull, P. (2012). Doing leadership in political speech: Semantic processes and pragmatic inferences. *Discourse & Society*, 23(2), 127-144.
- Finlayson, A., & Martin, J. (2008). 'It ain't what you say...': British political studies and the analysis of speech and rhetoric. *British Politics*, 3(4), 445-464.
- Fraser, B., & Nolen, W. (1981). The association of deference with linguistic form. *International journal of the Sociology of Language*, 1981(27), 93-110.
- Fraser, B. (1990). Perspectives on politeness. *Journal of pragmatics*, 14(2), 219-236.

- Goffman, E. (1967). On face-work. *Interaction ritual*, 5-45.
- Harris, S. (2001). Being politically impolite: extending politeness theory to adversarial political discourse. *Discourse & society*, 12(4), 451-472.
- Holtgraves, T., & Joong-Nam, Y. (1990). Politeness as universal: Cross-cultural perceptions of request strategies and inferences based on their use. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 59(4), 719.
- Holtgraves, T. (1997). Yes, but... positive politeness in conversation arguments. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 16(2), 222-239.
- Hyland, K. (1996). Writing without conviction? Hedging in science research articles. *Applied linguistics*, 17(4), 433-454.
- Ji, S. (2000). 'Face' and polite verbal behaviors in Chinese culture. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32(7), 1059-1062.
- Krebs, R. R., & Jackson, P. T. (2007). Twisting tongues and twisting arms: The power of political rhetoric. *European Journal of International Relations*, 13(1), 35-66.
- Levinson, P. Brown, S.C. (1987) *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Vol. 4. Cambridge university press, 1987.
- Mao, L. R. (1994). Beyond politeness theory: 'Face' revisited and renewed. *Journal of pragmatics*, 21(5), 451-486.
- Mills, S. (2002). *Rethinking politeness, impoliteness and gender identity* (Vol. 89). 69J.
- Mills, S. (2003). *Gender and politeness* (Vol. 17). Cambridge University Press.
- Morand, D. A. (1996). Dominance, deference, and egalitarianism in organizational interaction: A sociolinguistic analysis of power and politeness. *Organization Science*, 7(5), 544-556.
- Mullany, L. (2006). "Girls on tour": politeness, small talk, and gender in managerial business meetings. *Journal of Politeness Research. Language, Behaviour, Culture*, 2(1), 55-77.
- Reicher, S., & Hopkins, N. (1996). Self-category constructions in political rhetoric; an analysis of Thatcher's and Kinnock's speeches concerning the British miners' strike (1984-5). *European journal of social psychology*, 26(3), 353-371.
- Sari, N., & Chandra, T. M. The Use of Politeness Strategies in Trump's Speech to 19<sup>th</sup> Boy Scout Jamboree. In *Lilitrans Conference 2018* (p. 116).
- Schäffner, C. (1997). Strategies of translating political texts. *Benjamins translation library*, 26, 119-144.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (Ed.). (2008). *Culturally Speaking Second Edition: Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Westbrook, L. (2007). Chat reference communication patterns and implications: applying politeness theory. *Journal of Documentation*, 63(5), 638-658.

## **Websites**

Apps, P. (2015). *Greg Clark speech to NHF conference: Full transcript*. Retrieved from: <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/home/home/greg-clark-speech-to-nhf-conference-full-transcript-44925>

Apps, P. (2018a) *A list of recent housing policy u-turns*. Retrieved from: <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/a-list-of-recent-housing-policy-u-turns-57570>

Apps, P. (2018b). *Theresa May throws support behind housing associations in landmark speech*. Retrieved from: <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/theresa-may-throws-support-behind-housing-associations-in-landmark-speech-58176>

Department of Communities and Local Government. (2011). *A plain English guide to the Localism Act*. London: DCLG Publications. Retrieved from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf)

Homes & Communities Agency. (2016). *Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21*. Retrieved from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/517678/SO\\_and\\_AHP\\_prospectus\\_13\\_04\\_16.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/517678/SO_and_AHP_prospectus_13_04_16.pdf)

HM Government. (2011). *Autumn Statement 2011*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/autumn-statement-2011--3>

HM Government. (2011). *Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England*. London: DCLG Publications. Retrieved from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7532/2033676.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7532/2033676.pdf)

HM Government. (2015). *Autumn Statement and Spending Review 2015*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-statement-and-spending-review-2015>

HM Government. (2015). *Summer Budget 2015*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/budget-july-2015>

HM Government. (2016). *National Housing Federation – September 2016*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/national-housing-federation-september-2016>

HM Government. (2017). *Sajid Javid's Speech to the National Housing Federation Conference 2017*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/sajid-javids-speech-to-the-national-housing-federation-conference-2017>

HM Government. (2018). *PM Speech to the National Housing Federation Summit 19 September 2018*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-to-the-national-housing-federation-summit-19-september-2018>

Maier, E. (2017) *Sector keen to work with the pragmatic Mr Barwell*. Retrieved from: <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/comment/sector-keen-to-work-with-the-pragmatic-mr-barwell-50262>

Ministry of Community and Local Governments. (2018). *A New Deal for Social Housing*. London. Retrieved from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/733605/A\\_new\\_deal\\_for\\_social\\_housing\\_web\\_accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733605/A_new_deal_for_social_housing_web_accessible.pdf)

National Housing Federation. (2018) *National Housing Summit 2018*. Retrieved from: <https://summit.housing.org.uk/>

The Conservative Party. (2014). *David Cameron's Speech to Conservative Party Conference 2014*. Retrieved from: <http://press.conservatives.com/post/98882674910/david-cameron-speech-to-conservative-party>

The Conservative Party. (2015). *The Conservative Party Manifesto 2015*. Retrieved from: <https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto2015>

The Conservative Party. (2017). *The Conservative Party Manifesto 2017*. Retrieved from: <https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto>

The Conservative Party. (2017). *Theresa May's Speech to Conservative Party Conference 2017*. Retrieved from: <https://www.conservatives.com/sharethefacts/2017/10/theresa-mays-conference-speech>

Trust for London. (2018). *Poverty and Inequality data for Kensington & Chelsea*. Retrieved from: <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/data/boroughs/kensington-and-chelsea-poverty-and-inequality-indicato>

Zeffman, H. (2015). Right-to-buy deal backed by only 55% of housing associations. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/oct/17/right-to-buy-deal-backed-by-only-55-of-housing-associations>

1 **Appendix 1**

2 **[Greg Clark 2015 NHF speech](#)**

3

4 If we think about housing and ask ourselves the fundamental questions, what do people  
5 really want?

6 Food, a home, warmth and love.

7 Take any one of these away and you grotesquely diminish a life's potential for joy. Take  
8 shelter away and you make the attainment of the other three necessities that much harder  
9 to achieve.

10 One of the reasons I was so keen to spend time with you in Birmingham yesterday was  
11 because what you do matters. And I was also proud of my time on the board of a housing  
12 association and separately as the trustee of a hostel.

13 Proud because we did the vital job of providing those roofs to cover people's heads.

14 Proud too because through the dedication, the skill and the dedication of staff we gave  
15 hundreds of people what they need to achieve the future that they wanted but which at  
16 times seemed far out of reach.

17 So housing is special because it is so vital, but also because it's so personal every home  
18 you build or every home you manage changes the lives of the people who live in it. I bet  
19 you, like me, can picture the course of your lives through the homes that you have lived  
20 in.

21 For me it was a bungalow and a garden in Middleborough where I spent all of my  
22 childhood. Then the thrill of that first room of my own, Virginia Woolf was right about  
23 that at least, at university. The musty smell, the crappy furniture we've all been there,  
24 the creeping awareness that adulthood was coming to be associated with that moment.

25 And then after that the fun and the diplomatic challenges in a succession of flat shares  
26 post university.

27 The flat that I carried my first child home to, and now my family home in Kent, a home  
28 that begins again that cycle for my own children.

29 And it's true for everyone. For good and sometimes for bad.

30 And so it's a big responsibility to be the people, as we all are in this room, who can  
31 shape those memories and to a great measure those lives.

32 So that's why I, just like you am so determined to build more and better homes. Almost  
33 all of us in this hall today are fortunate enough to live in our homes. I say fortunate not  
34 just because of the economic security a home will provide, your home is a refuge against



35 everything the world can throw your way. So we have a duty to provide a home everyone  
36 can enjoy.

37 And that duty becomes an imperative when fewer and fewer people can share what our  
38 generation has taken for granted. The reason for this is well known and simple. We have  
39 been building too few homes. Far too few. For far too long.

40 There are over 200,000 households a year being formed. Households should have kept  
41 pace with that. Yet in recent memory house building suffered a cardiac arrest. In the last  
42 quarter of 2008, housebuilding was 20,000 homes away from stopping altogether.

43 Since then, the patient has been revived. But when commercial developers sat on their  
44 hands and their land banks, had it not been for the contribution made by housing  
45 associations, I'm the first to acknowledge the situation would have been much worse.

46 Now the [National Planning Policy Framework] is having a positive effect, just as we  
47 intended. Planning permissions are up by over a third since it was adopted. On average  
48 more homes are being built in Britain - this is what we argued during that big debate,  
49 with the support of the federation, and it's come to pass.

50 But it's not enough. Last year about 131,000 new homes were completed. Way short of  
51 the 200,000 plus that we need each year to house our fellow citizens. This must change.  
52 And I regard that as a personal responsibility.

53 I want to see a million homes built during in the next five years, and then I want more.

54 We must tackle the housing deficit with the same determination with which we are  
55 expunging the financial deficit. The long term economic plan is important, but the long  
56 term housing plan is vital too.

57 It is not just the number of new homes that has fallen way short of what's needed.

58 Twenty five years ago 85% of the population said they wanted it. Five years ago, it was  
59 86%. And yet the aspiration and the reality of home ownership has drifted apart.

60 In 2003 71% of people in this country achieved this ambition. Yet over the following  
61 decade that had fallen to 63%. Between 1996 and 2012 the number of 20 to 34 year olds  
62 living with their parents had increased by two thirds of a million. We have all heard of  
63 the bank of mum and dad, well increasingly young people have had to rely on the hotel  
64 of mum and dad too.

65 And our government is determined to ensure home ownership is once again seen as a  
66 reasonable aspiration for working people. So as with house building we have made some  
67 important progress. The number of first time buyers is at a seven year high. And through

68 policies like Help to Buy 200,000 people were assisted to buy their home during the last  
69 Parliament.

70 But as with housebuilding we have much further to go and I want to hold out just the  
71 same aspiration to own their own home to the next generation as to our generation. And  
72 that includes housing association tenants.

73 Your tenants share the same hopes and dreams as everyone else. They live in the same  
74 towns, their children go to the same schools, they have the same ambitions themselves.  
75 They should have the same opportunity, if they want it, to own their own home. And  
76 there is no reason at all why signing a tenancy agreement with a housing association  
77 should mean signing away your aspiration to own your own home.

78 That's why extending the Right to Buy to housing association tenants was such a big part  
79 of our election manifesto. So big in fact it was chosen to launch the manifesto itself.  
80 Now that manifesto has been endorsed by a clear majority in the polls and we will waste  
81 no time in discharging our promises. And to do so alongside a massive programme of  
82 house building such has not been seen in this country since the days of Macmillan.  
83 And that is what we will do during the years ahead of us. It is a big moment for our  
84 country and a point of decision for this sector.

85 I'll be completely candid, there are some who say that to achieve the transformation we  
86 need requires a fresh start - that the housing association sector has taken us so far but  
87 might not be the right partner for the future.

88 That the energy and appetite for rapid and creative development is not what it was. That  
89 in truth the sector's heart is in developing properties for rent, and little zeal for  
90 developing homes for home ownership.

91 That a once insurgent movement has become staid - with development too low and  
92 executive salaries too high.

93 That for the transformation in housing we seek we should look elsewhere. To councils  
94 through the devolution agenda, to private developers, to our own agencies in government  
95 and to new entities.

96 But there is another view: that this is a sector that has scored big successes over many  
97 years. That can be agile and adaptable to the changing opportunities and requirements of  
98 our nation. A sector that has always been respectful of the mandate of that successive  
99 governments have had.

100 That deep in the DNA of this sector is an instinct to empower and give opportunities to  
101 people, going beyond the strict business of building and renting out homes. And that the

102 devolution agenda, putting local communities in the driving seat is an unmissable  
103 opportunity for associations who know their communities inside out often better than  
104 most other people in those communities.

105 A view that this is a sector which is a standing army of expertise, motivation and  
106 experience, capable of building hundreds of thousands of new homes that our country so  
107 desperately needs.

108 So two contrasting views: Be content with the achievements of the past - or look to build  
109 and to own a new future.

110 And the choice between them will determine the very future of the housing association  
111 movement.

112 My unambiguous opinion is that this sector's future lies with the second option. You are  
113 already helping to reverse recent history, helping to build more homes than we have  
114 done for years. And of course you helped build 80,000 shared ownership homes over the  
115 last decade.

116 Now I want you to expand the mission by expanding the opportunities of home  
117 ownership even quicker. But in no way would such an expansion contradict your  
118 important historical mission.

119 Let me explain why. David Orr and I have spent the summer working together on a  
120 proposal that he makes for a big place for this sector in the future of government. At its  
121 heart is a joint commitment to build more homes than we have built for decades. And it's  
122 based on a recognition that you are voluntary organisations perfectly capable of working  
123 with me and with Brandon Lewis my housing minister and the government as willing  
124 partners rather than requiring legislative compulsion.

125 So David's proposal is in three parts:

126 The first is that the opportunity of extending the Right to Buy will be embraced  
127 voluntarily in keeping with the housing association tradition to empower and meet the  
128 aspiration of tenants.

129 Associations would give the chance to your tenants, for anyone who wishes to take it, the  
130 chance to own your own home. In other words all 2.3m tenants with the same degree of  
131 financial help through discounts that are available to council tenants.

132 In every case the tenant would have the chance if they want to achieve their goal. The  
133 housing association would have the chance to build a new property, expanding the  
134 housing association sector.

135 The presumption would be that most people would have the chance to buy the home that  
136 they live in. But just as with the council Right to Buy sometimes there may be good  
137 reason why that's not in everyone's interest: In a rural area where planning restrictions  
138 mean replacements simply can't be built for example, where the property is part of a  
139 wider service that's been provided such as sheltered accommodation.

140 In cases like this, the association would have the discretion, if reasonable in the spirit of  
141 the scheme to offer an alternative home, and the tenant would have the option to take  
142 their discount to the other property.

143 Each property sold will have the discount refunded by the government at open market  
144 level, so that no one is out of pocket.

145 And the second part of David's proposal is that the sector would have a guaranteed place  
146 as a major force in building new homes. Every home sold will trigger a new home built  
147 by a housing association on a one for one basis. For every tenant who exercises the Right  
148 to Buy housing stock will rise by one.

149 Releasing equity in people's homes to build new homes that otherwise couldn't be  
150 supplied will be one of the principle benefits of the Right to Buy.

151 Under David's proposals, it will be housing associations rather than alternative partners  
152 of government who will build hundreds of thousands of these new homes.

153 Furthermore we want these homes to be built as quickly as possible. As you know,  
154 councils have three years to build a new property when the Right to Buy is exercised. I  
155 want to speed that up. The Nat Fed has challenged us to simplify the regulatory hurdles  
156 so that new homes can be built within two years. I will rise to that challenge that has  
157 been set - to bring forward new land for development, including public land. To allow a  
158 broader range of new properties, including starter homes and shared ownership.

159 And where the Right to Buy is exercised in an association that is not developing new  
160 homes, the proposal is that the Nat Fed would help match them with an organisation that  
161 is keen.

162 The third part of David's proposed agreement would be to make an historic change.  
163 Rightly or wrongly, the housing association movement has not been principally  
164 associated with increasing home ownership. As most of us know in this room, that is  
165 very unfair.

166 Most of you in this room have been restrained by regulation, by public policy and by  
167 your public sector partners.

168 And yet even with these restraints you have found ways to be inventive enough to allow  
169 people who want to achieve their aspirations through such things as flexible tenancies.  
170 And so I want to work with you to provide the means for every tenant who wants to -  
171 new or existing - to acquire a stake in a home that can increase over time.  
172 I want to follow the same golden principle that applies to the Right to Buy, namely that  
173 where a financial contribution is injected by tenants all of it should be used to build new  
174 homes.  
175 Taken together, this is a proposal which offers the chance of a new partnership between  
176 housing associations and the government. It's one that would respect the independence  
177 and the voluntary ethos of the sector. And it provides for both for the extension of the  
178 Right and for other ownership opportunities, and critically for the expansion of home  
179 building.  
180 It is a proposal that if it were put to the government by the whole sector and agreed it  
181 would make it unnecessary to take legal measures to extend the Right to Buy.  
182 But of course, that is for you collectively to decide

1 **Appendix 2**

2 **Gavin Barwell 2016 NHF speech**

3 Introduction

4 It's a pleasure to be with you today.

5 I am very conscious, from my work as a constituency MP, of the vital role housing  
6 associations play in meeting housing need.

7 Whether it's large associations like Amicus Horizon, who are based in my constituency;  
8 smaller local ones like Croydon Churches; or specialist ones like Evolve, who house some of  
9 the most vulnerable people in our borough and are working with others to try to end street  
10 homelessness in Croydon.

11 In my time in this job, I hope to build as close a relationship with all of you as I have with  
12 them during the six years when I have had the privilege of serving as an MP.

13 The Right to Buy

14 Talking of relationships: a year ago Greg Clark stood here and set out proposals for a  
15 different kind of relationship between the government, housing associations and your tenants.

16 A relationship that puts the aspirations of your tenants first.

17 Many people were surprised - perhaps disappointed - that the government and National  
18 Housing Federation (NHF) members were able to find common cause and do it so quickly.

19 It wasn't part of their script.

20 The one that says the housing market is all about the conflict:

- 21 • public versus private
- 22 • renting versus buying
- 23 • demand versus supply

24 You've shown this doesn't need to be the case.

25 I saw the results for myself in Croydon earlier this month.

26 Until a few weeks ago, Sasha Dudley and her partner Peter Taylor were tenants of L&Q.

27 Now they are homeowners.

28 They told me buying their home had given them a sense of security that wasn't there before.

29 Even though they have lived in their home for nearly 20 years, things feel different now it is  
30 their home.

31 And they said they would never have been able to realise their dream if it wasn't for the  
32 voluntary Right to Buy.

33 There are thousands of housing association tenants like Sasha and Peter around the country.

34 On their behalf, I want take this opportunity to thank David Orr for his leadership, the 5  
35 housing associations who are piloting the scheme and the whole sector for rising to the  
36 challenge.

37 I know you're waiting for the details of when and how the deal will be rolled out.

38 You're not the only ones - I am inundated in emails from your tenants asking the same  
39 questions. You'll have to bear with me just a little longer, but rest assured that we remain  
40 100% committed to working with you to implement the deal.

41 And when we do, it is not just people like Sasha and Peter who will benefit from this policy.

42 Because I hope all of you are going to use the receipts from those sales to build new  
43 properties for rent.

44 That way the sale of properties to your tenants won't just help some people realise their  
45 dreams, it will also provide secure, affordable homes for some of the poorest people in our  
46 society.

47 Changing people's lives for the better, particularly those most in need of help.

48 That's what housing associations are for and it's also why I got into politics.

49 The case for building more homes

50 And it's why I was delighted when the Prime Minister asked me to be her Housing and  
51 Planning Minister.

52 Because housing is one of those rare issues that affects everyone.

53 Not just in the obvious sense that everyone needs a home, but also because we're all  
54 passionate about the places where we live, the derelict sites we'd like to see brought back into  
55 active use, the eyesores we'd like to see redeveloped and the beautiful buildings and precious  
56 open spaces we want protected.

57 I'm very conscious about the scale of the challenge.

58 We haven't built enough homes in this country for a very, very long time.

59 As a London MP, I see the consequences of that failure every week in my surgeries.

60 Young people forced to live in their parent's home until well into their 30s - a phenomenon  
61 that, as a parent of a teenager, I have a personal interest in ending.

62 People renting in the private sector, trying to save for a deposit on a home of their own but  
63 unable to do so because their rent swallows up such a big proportion of their monthly income.

64 People living in overcrowded conditions who have been stuck on a waiting list for a transfer  
65 for years.

66 And people who can't find anywhere to live, are accepted as homeless by their local council  
67 and face an extended stay in emergency accommodation.

68 When the Coalition government came to power in May 2010, we inherited the lowest  
69 peacetime rates of house building since the 1920s.

70 In the last 6 years, we have made significant progress.

71 The number of new homes being built has doubled.

72 We've helped over 300,000 households onto the housing ladder.

73 And - with your help - we were the first government since the 1980s to finish their term with  
74 a higher stock of affordable homes than when they started.

75 But there is absolutely no room for complacency.

76 In this country we expect our children's lives to be better than ours.

77 And in most regards they will be. They'll live longer than us. They'll see more of the world.  
78 They'll have access to technologies we can't even dream of.

79 And in the words of the wonderful Louis Armstrong, they will “know more than we’ll ever  
80 know”.

81 Indeed my 13 year-old seems to think he already does.

82 But because for many years now we haven’t built enough homes and prices have therefore  
83 risen faster than incomes, our children’s generation are less likely than our generation to own  
84 their own homes.

85 50% of today’s 45-year-olds were homeowners by the time they were 30, but for those born  
86 10 years later the figure is just 35%.

87 And only 26% of those who are 25 today are projected to be homeowners in 5 years’ time.

88 As the Prime Minister said here in Birmingham on 11th July:

89 Unless we deal with the housing deficit ... young people will find it even harder to afford  
90 their own home [and] the divide between those who inherit wealth and those who don’t will  
91 become even more pronounced.

92 That is not the kind of country she or I - or I am sure any of you - want to live in.

93 This isn’t just a problem for aspirational members of generation Y who want to own their  
94 own home.

95 It has consequences for all of us. If more and more people can’t get on the housing ladder,  
96 competition for tenancies in the private and social rented sectors will become more and more  
97 intense.

98 Rents will continue to increase and more and more working people will need help from  
99 Housing Benefit to pay their bills.

100 So if our job in the last Parliament was to rescue the housing market, now we must make it  
101 work for everyone.

102 This is one of the defining challenges of our generation.

103 Our strategy

104 So how are we going to meet it?

105 I don’t pretend to have all the answers two months into the job. But I do know this: we need  
106 to reject the false choices that have mired the housing debate for years.

107 I have spent my first 2 months talking to as many people as possible. I've asked everyone one  
108 simple question: why don't we build enough homes in this country?

109 Some people tell me it's all the planners fault. Government isn't releasing enough land and  
110 the planning system is too slow and too uncertain.

111 Others tell me it's all the developers fault. There's plenty of land in the system, but they're  
112 banking it and only building homes at a trickle to keep prices high.

113 The truth is we need to release more land, speed up the planning system and get homes built  
114 quicker once planning permission is granted.

115 Some people tell me I should concentrate on building more homes for people to buy. Most  
116 people want to own their own home so that should be my focus.

117 Others tell me we just have to accept that many young people in certain parts of the country  
118 will never be able to afford to own their own home and I should concentrate on building  
119 homes for rent.

120 The truth is we need more homes for sale, more homes for private rent and more sub-market  
121 homes for rent.

122 And while we're at it, we need a wider range of people building those homes and more  
123 innovation in how we build to speed up construction.

124 If I have learnt two things from all those conversations over the last 2 months, they are that  
125 there is no silver bullet and to distrust anyone who walks through my door claiming to have  
126 found one.

127 Housing associations' role

128 Ultimately it is the government's responsibility - and my personal responsibility as Housing  
129 Minister - to meet this challenge.

130 We're reforming the planning system to make sure it releases enough land, provides greater  
131 certainty and takes timely decisions.

132 We're releasing surplus public land - enough in this Parliament for 160,000 homes. We're  
133 calling on local government to do the same.

134 And we have doubled the housing budget. We now have the largest affordable housing  
135 programme for 40 years - £8 billion to help build 400,000 affordable homes over the next 5  
136 years.

137 But we can only do so much. As I said to the private developers at RESI 16 last week, we  
138 need everyone involved in the housing market to step up.

139 Housing associations already deliver around a third of all new homes every year, including  
140 the majority of affordable homes. You bring the skills, investment and strong private and  
141 public sector partnerships that make things happen.

142 But I know you can do more.

143 You know you can too. Your Ambition to [Deliver](#) report says you want to build 120,000  
144 homes per year by 2033.

145 Analysis published by the Regulator this year showed that while some housing associations  
146 are making the best use of resources and assets, much of the sector could do more.

147 And with more than 1,500 housing associations in the sector, that may include more mergers  
148 and partnerships.

149 I want you to explore every avenue for building more homes.

150 For a start, I want to see a wider range of quality bids for our affordable housing programme.

151 We're currently considering bids through to 2021.

152 Our Shared Ownership programme will help bridge the yawning gap that has opened up  
153 between renting and homeownership because of the requirement for large deposits.

154 And our Rent to [Buy](#) programme will give working households a springboard onto the  
155 property ladder after 5 years of renting and saving.

156 Some of you have said to me that you'd welcome the flexibility to bid for a wider mix of  
157 affordable housing.

158 We're happy to look at that – we remain committed to helping people onto the housing  
159 ladder, but not at the expense of reducing the number of homes our programme delivers.

160 Supported housing

161 And I will consider any other suggestions that you come forward with that could help you  
162 deliver more homes.

163 We've listened to what you had to say about supported housing. You warned that our welfare  
164 reforms risked the closure of existing provision and was choking off investment in new  
165 provision.

166 Last week, we announced changes that will protect the vulnerable people who rely on this  
167 sector and ensure a smooth transition to the new system.

168 We're exempting supported housing from the Local Housing Allowance rates until 2019/20.

169 At this point, we will bring in a new funding model which continues to fund the sector at  
170 current levels, with core housing costs funded through Housing Benefit/Universal Credit at  
171 the Local Housing Allowance level topped up by local councils who will receive a ring-  
172 fenced grant.

173 It is vital we get the detail right so we'll shortly be publishing a consultation paper to get your  
174 feedback.

175 Estate regeneration

176 As well as our affordable housing programme, I'd also like you to think about estate  
177 regeneration.

178 Since February, a team at my department has been looking at potential schemes and many of  
179 the strong proposals we've received involve housing associations.

180 I want to see housing associations at the heart of more of these schemes.

181 Rebuilding these estates will restore pride to communities, with new homes that are the best-  
182 designed and built with the latest construction methods.

183 You have an opportunity to improve the life chances of people in deprived communities  
184 across the country, and be at the cutting edge of housing supply.

185 Conclusion

186 I hope I've given you a sense of my personal commitment - and the new government's  
187 commitment - to increase to number of homes we build, and a broad outline of how we're  
188 going to do it.

189 We'll be filling in the details over the next few months, and both listening to you, and  
190 challenging you as we do so.

191 Listening to any ideas you have about what more the government can do to drive supply.  
192 And challenging you to build more - more homes for outright sale, more homes for shared  
193 ownership and more homes for rent.

194 Challenging you to think not just about quantity but about the quality of the schemes you  
195 develop.

196 And challenging you to drive innovation in the sector.

197 In the past, housing associations have not always been associated with efforts to increase  
198 homeownership - or even to build more homes.

199 No one can say that anymore.

200 We have not forgotten the way housing associations maintained supply through the darkest  
201 days of the recession when house building in other sectors fell away.

202 And today you are on the verge of extending the opportunity of homeownership to hundreds  
203 of thousands of your tenants.

204 Many never dreamed they would be facing that prospect.

205 As I face the challenges of this job, I look to you as key allies.

206 Allies in the fight to build more homes.

207 Allies in the fight to spread ownership.

208 Allies in the fight to provide secure homes for the most vulnerable in our society.

209 Allies in the fight to ensure the housing market in this country works for everyone.

210 People are looking to us for help and I look forward to working with you to ensure we don't  
211 let them down

1 **Appendix 3**

2 **Sajid Javid 2017 NHF speech**

3 Thank you, David [Orr, Chief Executive, National Housing Federation], and good morning  
4 everyone.

5 It's great to be here in Birmingham and a real honour to be opening your conference this  
6 year.

7 And it's good to see so many of you here at what is a particularly important and, as we've  
8 just heard, particularly challenging time for this country's housing associations.

9 I know, of course, you've got a lot on your minds.

10 I've certainly got a lot on mine and I'm looking forward to sharing that with you.

11 But before all that, as an almost-local Member of Parliament I have to give you a quick West  
12 Midlands history lesson!

13 Here at the ICC we're literally just over the road from the site of the first major Cadbury  
14 factory, which opened its doors in 1847.

15 It's not there anymore, sadly.

16 But if you pop out at lunchtime you can still see the little canal spur that served the rapidly  
17 growing business.

18 It's right there behind the giant hotel and the Australian theme pub!

19 I'm fairly sure neither of them were there at that time!

20 And that wasn't the only difference.

21 Back in the 1800s, the area wasn't the clean, fresh, welcoming place that you all saw this  
22 morning.

23 Quite the opposite.

2 46 And I remember my school careers adviser telling me that there was no point in aiming high  
2 47 because kids from my neck of the woods simply didn't take A-levels or go to university.  
2  
2 48 Society had low expectations of us, and we were expected to live down to them.  
2  
2 49 It was the same years later, when I was applying for jobs with merchant banks in London.  
2  
2 50 I got the sense that the interview panels had never before met someone who lived in the  
2 51 overcrowded flat above the family shop.  
3  
3 52 That's just my experience. It's just one person's story.  
3  
3 53 But if the Grenfell tragedy showed us anything, it was the extent to which these attitudes  
3 54 have spread and become deeply ingrained in the way this country thinks and it acts.  
3  
3 55 While I don't want to pre-judge the findings of the public or police inquiries, it's clear that in  
3 56 the months and the years before the fire the residents of Grenfell Tower were not listened to.  
3  
3 57 That their concerns were ignored or dismissed.  
3  
3 58 That too many people in positions of power saw tenants less as people with families and more  
3 59 as problems that needed to be managed.  
3  
3 60 A lot has been written and said about the social and political context of Grenfell.  
3  
3 61 Much of it accurate, some of it less so.  
3  
3 62 There's certainly been some unfair criticism of social landlords generally.  
4  
4 63 Unfair because I know that everyone in this room is passionate about what they do.  
4  
4 64 Passionate about getting safe, secure, affordable roofs over the heads of families.  
4  
4 65 I know that and you know that.  
4  
4 66 And I want to thank you all, and everyone that you employ, for all the good that you do.  
4 67 Thank you very much.  
4  
4 68 But the question I keep coming back to is very simple.

69 In one of the richest, most privileged corners of the UK – the world, even – would a fire like  
70 this have happened in a privately owned block of luxury flats?

71 If you believe that the answer is no, even if you think it was simply less likely, then it's clear  
72 that we need a fundamental rethink of social housing in this country.

73 Because whether they're owned by a council or by a housing association, whether they're  
74 managed by a TMO or a local authority, we're not just talking about bricks and mortar.

75 We're not just talking about assets on your balance sheet.

76 We're talking about peoples' homes.

77 About people's lives.

78 Over the past few weeks the Housing Minister, Alok Sharma, has been meeting with social  
79 housing tenants right across the country.

80 And from those conversations it's already clear that they want us to look again at the quality  
81 and safety of what's on offer.

82 To look again at the way tenants are listened to and their concerns acted on.

83 To look again at the number of homes being built, at community cohesion and more besides.

84 And that's exactly what this government is going to do.

85 Today I can announce that we will be bringing forward a green paper on social housing in  
86 England.

87 A wide-ranging, top-to-bottom review of the issues facing the sector, the green paper will be  
88 the most substantial report of its kind for a generation.

89 It will kick off a nationwide conversation on social housing.

90 What works and what doesn't work.

91 What has gone right and what has gone wrong,

92 Why things have gone wrong and – most importantly – how to fix them.

93 And the results will help everyone involved in the whole world of social housing: local and  
94 central government, housing associations, TMOs, and of course the tenants themselves, to  
95 make this country's social housing provision something the whole nation can be proud of.

96 Of course, in the wake of Grenfell, the green paper will look at safety issues.

97 But it will need to go much further.

98 It will look at the overall quality of social homes, many of which are now beginning to show  
99 their age.

100 It will cover service management, the way social homes and their tenants are taken care of.

101 It will look at the rights of tenants and show how their voices can be better heard.

102 And it will cover what can be done to ensure their complaints are taken seriously and dealt  
103 with properly, and make sure tenants have clear, timely avenues to seek redress when things  
104 do go wrong.

105 If a resident reports a crack in the wall that you can fit your hand in, big enough to use as a  
106 book shelf, it shouldn't just be patched up and ignored.

107 The reason it's there and the impact it could have need to be properly investigated.

108 Problems shouldn't just be fixed, they should be learned from.

109 These are the kind of issues the green paper will explore.

110 But that's not all. It will also look at wider issues of place, community, and the local  
111 economy.

112 How can social landlords help to create places that people really want to live in, places where  
113 roses can grow?

114 What role can social housing policy play in building safe and integrated communities, where  
115 people from different backgrounds get along no matter what type of housing they live in?

116 How do we maximise the benefits for social housing for the local, regional and national  
117 economy as part of our Industrial Strategy?

118 What more can we do to help tackle homelessness?

119 What support is needed for leaseholders who have a social landlord?

120 What can be done to tackle illegal sub-letting, not just chasing down offenders but dealing  
121 with the cause of the problem in the first place?

122 And, at the heart of it all, how can you, me, local government and others work together to get  
123 more of the right homes built in the right places?

124 As you can tell – I hope! – I’m talking about a substantial body of work.

125 It’s a green paper that will inform both government policy and the wider debate for many  
126 years to come.

127 And I want to make sure that we hear from everyone with something to say.

128 Not just the usual suspects – those working in the sector or the think-tanks and lobbyists.

129 But the people who matter most, the people living in or clamouring for social housing.

130 So it’s not something we’re going to rush.

131 Yes, I do want to see it published as soon as possible.

132 But what matters most is getting it right.

133 There’s simply too much at stake to do otherwise.

134 Whatever comes about as a result of the green paper, much of the delivery is going to be  
135 down to the people in this room, the housing associations.

136 You own homes, you manage homes and of course you build homes.

137 Tens of thousands of them every year.

140 But I'm under no illusion that, without your contribution, the situation would have been far,  
141 far worse.

142 By next year you're set to reach 65,000 new homes a year, an incredible achievement and one  
143 that makes a real difference to the lives of countless people. So thank you again.

144 The associations you represent are charities, trusts, co-operatives, societies and so on.

145 But you don't get build-out numbers like that, numbers that rival the likes of Barratt and  
146 Bellway, without running your organisations as serious businesses.

147 And for all your passion and your social mission, you're exactly that – serious businesses.

148 The people in this room today represent a sector with £140 billion of assets and some £70  
149 billion of debt.

150 Before I came into politics, a huge part of my job was all about helping companies secure the  
151 capital that they needed in order to grow.

152 Some of it through debt, some of it through investment.

153 So I know first-hand that a business can't attract funding without certainty about its future  
154 prospects.

155 Businesses need to know that economic regulations aren't going to dramatically change  
156 without warning.

157 They need a stable, predictable base on which to build – literally, in your case!

158 And of course lenders need to know that a company is a reliable investment prospect before  
159 they'll put up any money.]

160 Our housing white paper, which was published earlier this year, gave you all a detailed  
161 insight into our long-term plans for fixing the broken housing market, and the vital role that  
162 housing associations will have in that.

163 Thanks to the white paper, you already know that we're doing all we can to free up sites, to  
164 reform the planning process, to invest in infrastructure and so on.

165 That we're working with you to help you build faster and better, raising both the quality and  
166 quantity of our housing stock.

167 But of course you need much more than that.

168 Right now, you're trying to make long-term investment decisions without knowing what your  
169 rental return is going to be after 2020.

170 It's not ideal, of course I get that.

171 You need certainty and you need clarity and you need them sooner rather than later.

172 That's why I've been pushing right across government, as hard as I can, to confirm the future  
173 formula for social housing rents.

174 I would have liked to stand here today and tell you exactly what it is going to be.

175 Unfortunately, I have to tell you, the t's are still being crossed and the i's dotted.

176 But I can promise you this: an announcement will be made very, very soon.

177 I'm doing everything I can, pushing as hard I can.

178 And you're not going to have to wait much longer for the detail you need and deserve.

179 The same is true of Right To Buy.

180 It's a policy that has always been popular with tenants.

181 I know the same is not necessarily true of all the delegates here today.

182 I think it's a great scheme.

183 It helps people get on the housing ladder and, by releasing funds, it helps deliver the next  
184 generation of homes for affordable rent.

185 There are issues that need looking at, I accept that.

186 I thank the National Housing Federation and all of you for your open, honest and constructive  
187 feedback on Right to Buy.

188 We'll be making a decision on the way forward just as soon as we possibly can.

189 As many of you will have seen, at DCLG's main office there's a wall with official portraits of  
190 everyone who has led the department or its predecessors.

191 They go all the way back to Hugh Dalton, in 1950.

192 Some of the pictures are more flattering than others.

193 Richard Crossman, he looks like he's appearing in an Alfred Hitchcock film.

194 Chris Patten seems to have been surprised by a photographer while relaxing in his local  
195 library.

196 And John Prescott's eyes... they kind of follow you wherever you walk...

197 I know some civil servants find that a little bit creepy when they're alone in the office late at  
198 night!

199 But the one that always catches my eye is Harold Macmillan.

200 When Winston Churchill appointed Macmillan as Housing Minister in 1951, he gave him one  
201 very simple instruction: "build houses for the people".

202 And the presence of his photograph on the wall at DCLG is a daily reminder of the  
203 spectacular fashion in which he did just that.

204 I'm proud of my government's record on council housing.

205 [Political content removed]

206 But Macmillan was on a whole other level.

207 While he was housing minister, Britain built 300,000 houses a year, the vast majority what  
208 today we would call social homes.

209 Cramped, dense, inner-city slums were replaced with spacious, high-quality homes in the  
210 suburbs.

211 Millions of people were given their first experience of indoor plumbing, of front and rear  
212 gardens.

213 Never mind living somewhere a rose could grow – the planners behind new towns boasted of  
214 homes where a tree could be seen from every window.

215 Supermac built houses for the people and the people loved them.

216 Living in social housing carried no stigma, no shame.

217 Quite the opposite, in fact.

218 For many, it was seen the gold standard for accommodation.

219 Not a final safety net for the desperate and destitute but something you could genuinely  
220 aspire to, housing you would actively choose to live in.

221 As a country we were all rightly proud of it.

222 But over time, that all changed.

223 Social housing stock became increasingly neglected, as did the people who lived in it.

224 The Establishment became detached, aloof, focussed its attentions elsewhere.

225 And the tragic events of 14 June showed exactly where that attitude can lead.

226 That's why, when I say we must do everything possible to prevent a repeat of Grenfell, I'm  
227 not just talking about the cladding or the stairways or the sprinklers.

228 We need to shift the whole conversation about social housing, reframe the whole debate.

229 We need to challenge outdated, unfair attitudes.

230 We need to return to the time, not so very long ago, when social housing was valued.

231 It was treasured.

232 Something we could all be proud of whether we lived in it or not.

233 I know that's exactly what many of you in the sector have been trying to achieve for many,  
234 many years.

235 Well, I'm proud to stand here today and say that you have a Secretary of State who's totally  
236 committed to the cause.

237 I'm delighted to say you have a Prime Minister who is too.

238 Because we both ~~recognise~~ that if we're going to make this a country that works for  
239 everyone, we need housing that works for everyone.

240 And that's true regardless of whether you're an owner-occupier, a private rental tenant, or  
241 living in social housing.

242 After any disaster we search for lessons, for a legacy, for some light to come out of the  
243 darkness.

244 The legacy of Grenfell, the lessons that we learn, the changes that we make – none of that  
245 should be confined to fire safety.

246 The legacy of Grenfell can and must be a whole new approach to the way this country thinks  
247 about social housing.

248 Achieving this will not be simple or straightforward.

249 We – all of us – must be committed to bringing about this change.

250 It demands nothing less.

1 **Appendix 4**

2 **Theresa May 2018 NHF speech**

3 Thank you, Diane, and good morning everyone.

4 It is a pleasure to be here with you all today at what is an event of firsts and lasts.

5 I will start with the lasts...

6 Reference has already been made to the fact this is David Orr's final annual conference as  
7 Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation.

8 In his 12 years at the helm David has done much to refocus and reinvigorate the housing  
9 association sector, and has been a worthy champion for your cause.

10 David, it has been a pleasure working with you since I became Prime Minister, and I am very  
11 sorry to see you go.

12 But I know that, in Kate Henderson, the NHF has found a worthy successor and the right  
13 person to take the Federation on the next stage of its journey.

14 And, Kate, I am very much looking forward to getting to know you and working with you to  
15 tackle what remains one of the great challenges of our time.

16 While this may be David's last NHF conference, I have to admit it is my first.

17 In fact I was shocked to discover that this is the first time in history any Prime Minister has  
18 spoken at what is the biggest event on the housing association calendar.

19 To me, that speaks volumes about the way in which social housing has, for too long and  
20 under successive governments, been pushed to the edge of the political debate.

21 At best taken for granted, at worst actively undermined.

22 Well, I'm very pleased to say that is no longer the case.

23 Because, since my very first day in Downing Street, I have made it my personal mission to  
24 fix our broken housing system.

25 Doing so underpins so much of what this government is working to achieve, from tackling  
26 loneliness to supporting the industries of the future.

27 And housing associations have a huge role to play in making sure that vision becomes a  
28 reality.

29 We are already making good progress.

30 Doing all we can to get more of the right homes built in the right places, so we can help more  
31 people onto the housing ladder – and ensure that those who cannot afford to own their own  
32 home also have a decent place to live.

33 We have committed tens of billions of pounds to getting homes built, including creating the  
34 infrastructure that unlocks sites where they are needed most.

35 Our new National Planning Policy Framework has removed unnecessary barriers to  
36 homebuilding and made it harder for commercial developers to dodge their affordable home  
37 obligations.

38 We are gearing up Homes England to be more proactive and interventionist, so that it can  
39 drive more and better development.

40 The Affordable Homes Programme is supporting the delivery of a quarter of a million  
41 affordable homes right across the country, with thousands of them available for social rent.

42 And the Land Assembly and Small Sites funds, together worth more than £1.9 billion, are  
43 now available.

44 They allow us to make positive interventions in the land market, bring more sites to market,  
45 and capture more of the land value for the benefit of local communities.

46 Just this morning we have heard the NHF calling for more of the value generated by public  
47 investment and the planning system to be captured and invested in affordable homes, public  
48 services and local infrastructure.

49 It is an important issue, which is why the government consulted on it recently.

50 We will be responding in full in the near future.

51 But in the meantime let me assure you that we share your commitment to giving communities  
52 a fairer share of the value created by development.

53 Land is an irreplaceable natural resource, and we must make sure its use benefits us all.

54 As well as boosting housing supply, we are taking action to protect and support homeowners  
55 and tenants.

56 Banning letting agent fees for people who rent their homes.

57 Clamping down on rogue landlords and unscrupulous managing agents.

58 And bringing an end to unjustified use of leasehold.

59 I am sure many of the people in this room will have responded to our consultation on making  
60 longer, more family-friendly tenancies the norm – the results of that will be published shortly.

61 And our Green Paper on Social Housing, which was of course announced at last year's NHF  
62 conference, offers a landmark opportunity for major reforms to improve fairness, quality and  
63 safety for all residents living in social housing.

64 James Brokenshire, Kit Malthouse, and ministers and officials right across government are  
65 pulling out all the stops to make sure everyone in this country has a safe, secure and  
66 affordable place to call home.

67 And already we are seeing the results.

68 In 2016/17, more than 217,000 additional homes were added across England.

69 That represents a 15 per cent increase on the previous year.

70 In fact, with the exception of one year, the last time we saw net completions this high Lady  
71 Thatcher was in Downing Street.

72 Yet we should not lose sight of the fact that the housing crisis we face today did not come  
73 about overnight.

74 It is the result of decades of neglect.

75 Year after year in which housebuilding of all kinds fell even as demand rose.

76 So, while the steps we are taking are already making a real and lasting difference to millions  
77 of lives, we should not pretend that our broken housing system can be fixed at the flick of a  
78 switch.

79 And nor should we see it as a challenge for central government alone.

80 Rather, it is a challenge we must rise to together.

81 One that can only be tackled by many different parties working together in partnership.

82 That is why, when local authorities asked us for a more robust planning framework and  
83 greater clarity over local plans and viability assessments, we made sure they got it.

84 When developers told us they needed greater investment in infrastructure and a reliable  
85 pipeline of skilled construction workers, we set about securing both.

86 And we have also been listening to housing associations.

87 After Sajid Javid told last year's NHF conference that the government wanted to do more to  
88 support your sector, you asked us to do three things.

89 First, you said that to plan ahead and secure future investment, you needed long-term  
90 certainty on rents.

91 We have given you that long-term certainty.

92 Second, you said that to keep your properties affordable for all, the Local Housing Allowance  
93 cap should not be extended to the social sector.

94 We have not extended that cap.

95 And third, you said that if you were going to take a serious role in not just managing but  
96 building the homes this country needs, you had to have the stability provided by long-term  
97 funding deals.

98 Well, eight housing associations have already been given such deals, worth almost £600  
99 million and paving the way for almost 15,000 new affordable homes.

100 And today, I can announce that new longer-term partnerships will be opened up to the most  
101 ambitious housing associations through a ground-breaking £2 billion initiative.

102 Under the scheme, associations will be able to apply for funding stretching as far ahead as  
103 2028/29 – the first time any government has offered housing associations such long-term  
104 certainty.

105 Doing so will give you the stability you need to get tens of thousands of affordable and social  
106 homes built where they are needed most, and make it easier for you to leverage the private  
107 finance you need to build many more.

108 The offer is typical of the positive approach this government has taken with the housing  
109 sector since I became Prime Minister.

110 You asked, we delivered.

111 Now, I have something to ask of you.

112 Last year I told the big commercial developers that we would give them the support they  
113 asked for – but that, in return, we expected them to do their duty by getting homes built.

114 Today, I'm asking housing associations to use the tools we have given you.

115 Not just to build more homes, though of course more homes are needed.

116 But to take the lead in transforming the very way in which we think about and deliver  
117 housing in this country.

118 Rather than simply acquiring a proportion of the properties commercial developers build, I  
119 want to see housing associations taking on and leading major developments themselves.

120 Because creating the kind of large-scale, high-quality developments this country needs  
121 requires a special kind of leadership.

122 Leadership you are uniquely well-placed to provide.

123 Your close ties with local communities give you an unparalleled insight into what a  
124 community needs in a development.

125 A clear vision for the whole site and how it can complement existing places, not just a narrow  
126 focus on fitting in the maximum number of units and the bare minimum of social homes.

127 Your social mission can ensure developments are rooted in a conception of the public good,  
128 rather than in a simple profit motive.

129 That means creating genuinely mixed communities with the right infrastructure and truly  
130 affordable housing.

131 Your unique status as public interested, non-profit private institutions allows you to attract  
132 patient investment and deploy it to secure long-term returns on quality rather than short-term  
133 speculative gains.

134 Your expertise as property managers means you can nurture attractive, thriving places for  
135 decades to come.

136 You are capable of riding out the ups and downs of the business cycle, as we saw in the years  
137 after the economic crash when housing associations carried on building even as private  
138 developers hunkered down.

139 And you do all this with the discipline, rigour and management qualities of the serious multi-  
140 million pound businesses that many of you are.

141 This combination of qualities allows housing associations to achieve things neither private  
142 developers nor local authorities are capable of doing.

143 And to see what that means on the ground, you need simply look at two major developments  
144 either side of the River Thames.

145 For years, the private sector struggled to make a success of Barking Riverside.

146 Lacking a guiding vision for the site and constrained by short-term business cycles, its huge  
147 potential went untapped.

148 Today, under the leadership of L&Q, the build-out rate has quadrupled.

149 The project is finally beginning to deliver on its potential, and is on course to become a  
150 thriving, growing community.

151 On the opposite bank, two local authorities had similar problems dealing with the unique  
152 challenges and opportunities of the Thamesmead estate.

153 Now, thanks to the commitment and insight of Peabody, there are ambitious plans for up to  
154 20,000 new homes in one of the UK's most over-subscribed cities.

155 Making complex projects like this work requires vision, determination and the courage to do  
156 development differently.

157 Housing associations possess that.

158 Given the right tools and the right support, you can act as the strategic, long-term investors in  
159 the kind of high-quality places this country needs.

160 To put it simply, you get homes built.

161 And I want to work with you to transform the way we do so.

162 But the unique status, rich history and social mission of housing associations mean you also  
163 have a much broader role to play.

164 A role that includes changing the way tenants and society as a whole think about social  
165 housing.

166 Midway through oral historian Tony Parker's The People of Providence, the author recounts  
167 a conversation with a woman who lived on Southwark's Brandon Estate, not far from where  
168 we are this morning.

169 “I wouldn’t want to be thought of as an estate person, not in any way at all,” she tells him. “I  
170 live here, but I’d never say to anyone my home is here.”

171 That conversation took place almost 40 years ago, but it could just as easily have happened  
172 today.

173 Because, for many people, a certain stigma still clings to social housing.

174 Some residents feel marginalised and overlooked, and are ashamed to share the fact that their  
175 home belongs to a housing association or local authority.

176 And on the outside, many people in society – including too many politicians – continue to  
177 look down on social housing and, by extension, the people who call it their home.

178 Part of the problem is physical, in the buildings themselves.

179 Whether unintentionally or by design, the decisions we make about the homes we build for  
180 social rent – their location, quality and appearance – can all too easily make them distinct  
181 from the community in which they stand.

182 This, in turn, can cement prejudice and stigma among those who live in them and wider  
183 society, leading to lowered expectations and restricted opportunities.

184 It shouldn’t be this way.

185 On a new mixed-tenure development, the social housing should not be tucked away behind  
186 the private homes, out of sight and out of mind.

187 As you look from building to building, house to house, you should not be able to tell simply  
188 by looking which homes are affordable and which were sold at the market rate.

189 The quality of aesthetic, design and build should not be any lower just because a property is  
190 to be managed by a housing association.

191 Some say that quantity, quality and affordability must always be traded off against one  
192 another.

193 Well to them, I say look at the Nansledan development outside Newquay.

194 A whole new community being built to meet local needs and with the support of local people.  
195 Thousands of homes of all types and tenures.

196 All of the highest quality, in keeping with traditional local styles, and with no way of telling  
197 from the outside which properties are being built for housing associations and which are  
198 destined for the private market.

199 As builders yourselves and as large-scale buyers of homes, you have the power to deliver or  
200 demand the quality of social homes the people of this country deserve.

201 We should never see social housing as something that need simply be “good enough”, nor  
202 think that the people who live in it should be grateful for their safety net and expect no better.

203 Whether it is owned and managed by local authorities, TMOs or housing associations, I want  
204 to see social housing that is so good people are proud to call it their home.

205 Proud to tell people where they live.

206 Proud to be thought of, in the words of Parker’s interviewee, as “an estate person”.

207 Our friends and neighbours who live in social housing are not second-rate citizens.  
208 They should not have to put up with second-rate homes.

209 And that applies to management every bit as much as design and construction.

210 In 2018, most housing associations are not in the business of building houses.  
211 Rather, you manage them, maintain them and take care not only of the buildings themselves  
212 but of the people who call them home.

213 It is work that is every bit as important as building and development and, when done badly,  
214 the impact can range from upsetting to catastrophic.

215 While it would not be right for me to pre-empt the findings of the public inquiry into the  
216 Grenfell tragedy, it is clear that many of the tower’s tenants felt ignored, patronised and  
217 overlooked by the TMO responsible for their homes and their safety.

218 Over the past year the issues they raised have been echoed by social housing tenants across  
219 the country.

220 Repairs botched or neglected.

221 Problems not dealt with.

222 Complaints ignored.

223 Again, it does not have to be this way.

224 Housing associations, with their historic social mission and focus on the civic good, can be at  
225 the forefront of showing what good property management looks like.

226 Across England, housing associations manage almost three million properties.

227 That gives you tremendous influence, the power to raise the standards of millions of homes  
228 and, in doing so, do much to shift perceptions of social housing.

229 And you can go further still, making a real and lasting difference to the lives of your tenants.

230 In my Maidenhead constituency I recently met a single mother whose housing association –  
231 Housing Solutions – hadn't just provided her with a new home but opened up a whole new  
232 life for her.

233 Rather than simply managing her property, Housing Solutions connected her with the training  
234 and support she needed to start her own business.

235 That business is so successful she has been able to move from a social rented home into  
236 shared ownership, getting that vital first foot on the property ladder for her family.

237 Elsewhere, housing associations are helping some of society's most vulnerable people: those  
238 without a home at all.

239 Here in London, more than 50 associations are working with St Mungo's and other  
240 organisations to deliver the Clearing House project, helping to get rough sleepers off the  
241 streets, out of danger, and on the road to a safe and secure future.

242 They are all wonderful examples of the work that housing associations can do above and  
243 beyond simply building and managing properties.

244 And they show how it is possible for the housing associations of 2018 to carry forward the  
245 social justice mission of the pioneers who created the sector in Victorian times – and their  
246 descendants who stepped up half a century ago in the wake of Cathy Come Home.

247 The rise of social housing in this country provided what has been called the “biggest  
248 collective leap in living standards in British history”.

249 It brought about the end of the slums and tenements, a recognition that all of us, whoever we  
250 are and whatever our circumstances, deserve a decent place to call our own.

251 Today, housing associations are the keepers of that legacy.

252 The bearers and protectors of a precious idea that has already made an immeasurable  
253 difference to tens of millions of lives and has the potential to transform countless more.

254 For too long, your work has gone ~~unrecognised~~ and under-appreciated at the highest levels.

255 But no longer.

256 This government values housing associations.

257 Over the past two years we have worked with you, listened to you, and responded to you.

258 You asked for our support, and you have our support.

259 Not mere lip service, but real policies, real change, real action.

260 Now it is your turn to act, building the homes we need and challenging the attitudes that hold  
261 us back.

262 Fixing our broken housing market will not be quick or easy.

263 But it can be done.

264 And, with this government's support, housing associations can be at the ~~centre~~ of making it  
265 happen.

266 Building on more than a century of history, and carrying forward the torch of high-quality,  
267 affordable housing for generations to come.