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Alok Sharma MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning
Department for Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
Westminster
London SW1P 4DF

26 July 2017

Dear Mr Sharma MP,

We are writing to welcome the Government's announcement of a Draft Tenants' Fees Bill in the Queen's Speech, which will finally tackle one of the biggest concerns of private renters in our borough of Hackney struggling with rocketing rents and charges.

We have long campaigned for the banning of fees and capping of deposits so that renters in Hackney and across the country can stop paying rip-off fees for basic tasks such as administration, credit and immigration checks – helping them put that money towards saving for a first home instead.


However, we are concerned that there is no clear legislative timetable for the Bill, and would encourage you to publish this as soon as possible to ensure these crucial measures are not delayed further. We would also encourage you not to water down the proposals in response to well-funded lobbying from the landlord and letting agent sector – and instead listen to the thousands of supportive responses to your consultation.

The number of people privately renting in Hackney continues to rise and has doubled in the last decade. During that time, rents have increased massively. A two-bedroom home now costs £1,820 per month on average – over £300 more than it did in 2011 – meaning residents need to earn over £65,000 a year to afford it. And that's before deposits are taken into account.

These renters are too often forgotten in the national debate about social housing and home ownership.

This week, Hackney became the first council in England to offer its own voluntary ban ahead of any legislation – following the example of businesses who are already leading the way in our borough – so that renters here will not have to wait yet longer to benefit.

Our Better Renting campaign aims to highlight the work of good landlords and the help on offer to tenants in Hackney – but also to outline the action the Government must take to make renting fairer, including:



- **Fairness for tenants**
Renters need a stable home too. We want to see long term tenancies, a ban on 'no DSS' adverts, and an end to agency fees for tenants now.
- **Tackling rogue landlords**
We want to put a stop to landlords renting out unfit homes by promoting a more robust fit and proper landlord regime and publishing a register of properties and landlords, including a list of convicted landlords.
- **Supporting professional landlords**
We want to support good landlords, ensuring they are accredited and clued up on their legal responsibilities.
- **More affordable rents**
We think rent increases should be capped at the rate of inflation to help make rents more affordable and predictable.

While we welcome the Draft Tenants' Fees Bill, it will do nothing to tackle the widespread concerns of renters – from poor conditions to unstable tenancies.

We would be happy to meet you to discuss these proposals in more detail.

In view of the public interest in this matter, we are releasing this letter to the media.

Yours sincerely,



Philip Glanville
Mayor of Hackney



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