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Dear Landlord,

Rebuilding a better Hackney – supporting private renters beyond the eviction ban

Throughout the coronavirus crisis, I have called on landlords in Hackney to do everything they can to support their tenants private renters in Hackney who are or will become affected by the outbreak.

While the height of the pandemic might be over, the real impact on private renters may have just begun. With the freeze on evictions ending on 23 August, many of those put into financial difficulty during the pandemic so far may struggle to pay their rent and make up shortfalls in their payments over recent months. Moreover, the real financial impact of the crisis is only just starting to hit jobs and incomes, meaning the number of people who will find it hard to make their rent payments is likely to grow.

As we look to the next phase of pandemic and the longer term recovery, we're committed to rebuilding a better Hackney – and that means building a better private rented sector.

Our borough's 34,000 private renters have long been on the frontline of Hackney's housing crisis, and in many ways this has been exacerbated by the pandemic. But the temporary freeze on evictions has offered a glimpse of what a fairer system could look like. That's why we're continuing to campaign for a final end Section 21 evictions, and for reform of the welfare system by ending the benefit cap which penalises large families and areas with high rents and restoring a system based on need.

But while we make this case to the government, it's also time to build a new relationship between landlords and private renters in Hackney. Here are three ways you can help:

- 1. Support your tenants** – despite the eviction freeze ending and some lockdown restrictions easing, we're encouraging landlords to be flexible, understanding and to give their tenants the support they need, even if that means going beyond the requirements set by the government. This includes providing assistance long-term with even rent shortfalls, time to make overdue payments, and not using non-payment of rent due to coronavirus as a basis for eviction.

2. **Use empty properties** – Every property that sits empty is an opportunity for a family to have a safe and secure home missed. If you or someone you know has an unused, self-contained property that could be used as emergency or temporary accommodation for a local family, please tell us. This includes the many Airbnb or other short-term let properties that may currently be unused. Contact the housing supply team on 020 8356 4411 or housingsupply@hackney.gov.uk.

3. **Get your property licensed** – Thousands of properties in Hackney need a licence to ensure they meet good standards and their landlords treat their tenants fairly. We're enforcing against those who don't have the right licence or fail to comply with the licensing conditions. Make sure you've got the licence you need before we take action. Find out more: hackney.gov.uk/property-licensing

Finally, I would like to reiterate that many renters' incomes are being significantly affected by the pandemic, and Hackney's high rent levels mean support through sick pay or Universal Credit is rarely enough to provide security. I strongly encourage you to help Hackney set the right example and provide your tenants with the support they need.

Our benefits and housing needs service can help ensure tenants get the financial support they are entitled to, provide advice on maintaining tenancies, and – where there is likely to be shortfalls in rent payments – help with applications for discretionary housing payments.

Full information is available at hackney.gov.uk/coronavirus-financial-support

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Sem Moema
Mayoral Adviser for Private Renting and Housing Affordability