



**SOUTHERN LANDLORDS' ASSOCIATION**  
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Gavin Barwell, MP,  
House of Commons,  
London,  
SW1A 0AA

April 24<sup>th</sup> 2017

Dear Minister,

Please find below a recent email sent to you regarding your forthcoming manifesto:-

Minister,

Whilst you are working on the new manifesto for the forthcoming election, we would be pleased if you would remember that private landlords are an essential part of the economy, accounting for some 20% of the nation's housing requirements (according to the English Housing Survey) now outstripping the social sector.

But landlords are convinced by central and local governments attitude towards them that they are the pariahs of society. We conducted a recent survey of members and many of them intend to sell property making a substantial number of tenants homeless. The reason constantly given is that it is too complicated and not financially worthwhile to continue - we can make this survey available to you if required.

To that end we would be pleased to see the following in the new manifesto:-

1. treat landlords who manage their portfolio as a business; or even better allow them to elect whether to be treated as a business or investment activity, as they do in France;
  2. further examine Local Authorities use of Discretionary Licensing to improve their budget, to the cost to the tenants;  
All Local Authorities already have the powers they require to carry out their jobs; Licensing was intended as a tool of last resort to rectify the genuine problems, and should be used as such. Blanket use actually has the opposite effect making Local Authorities too busy dealing with applications from genuine landlords to be able to see the criminal element;
  3. look again at the way the expense of landlord's interest costs are treated by HMRC (Clause 24 amendments);
  4. help the industry to become more professional by introducing mandatory registration and training/accreditation. This would further help limit criminal landlords;

5. overhaul the method to obtain repossession where tenants stop paying rent (Section 8 notice). Many landlords issue short term tenancies to enable them to use a Section 21, because the Section 8 route can be fraught with difficulties, ratcheting up costs for landlords;
6. stop the VOA reclassifying single rooms as Band A Council Tax. This is a tax on the poorest tenants in society, forcing many onto the streets;
7. critical that the 'Rogues Database' is made public, or at least available to trade associations. This will stop well meaning landlords appointing a banned agent/landlord to help manage their properties;
8. remove the 3% surcharge on properties over £1M - hardly 1st time buys and would probably increase level of transactions so result in similar levels of SDLT;
9. equalise CGT rates on disposals or allow business roll over relief;
10. provide funding for councils to provide relief from council tax if a property is being refurbished to provide accommodation to current building regs;
11. ability to reclaim VAT on materials and works when property converted or built to new residential property available to rent - currently only available sales or main residence.

We trust that you will be able to take time to consider these proposals. As always, we are happy to meet you to discuss any of these points further.

Yours sincerely

Peter Littlewood