



A new era for the private rented sector

As the third and final part in its series on housing law reform, the Law Commission today announces its proposals for better regulation of the private rented sector.

The report, *Housing: Encouraging Responsible Letting*, follows wide consultation with both landlords and tenants. It focuses on improving the overall coherence and stability of the current private rental framework in a cost-effective way.

Based on the principles of smart regulation, the Commission recommends a programme of staged reforms designed to promote self-regulation and enhance voluntary initiatives already in place in England and Wales. The proposals include

- Creating a housing standards monitor (for each of England and Wales) for the private rented sector
- Establishing an associated stakeholder board to which representatives of all sides of the private residential rented property sector are appointed
- Developing a single code of housing management practice for landlords
- Making landlord accreditation schemes available in every local authority area
- Launching a pilot programme for home condition certificates

The Commission proposes that independent evaluation and development of appropriate incentives to make the programme attractive to landlords should supplement these initiatives.

Professor Martin Partington, who was the Commission's Special Consultant on Housing Law in charge of the project, said

"Too much privately rented property is in a poor condition and poorly managed: the law does not operate as Parliament intended. An increasing number of people are deciding to rent in the current economic climate making it more important than ever that the private rented sector takes its place effectively in the housing market.

The recommendations in our report are aimed at benefiting both landlords and tenants by enabling them to use existing legal processes more productively thereby more fully realising the intended impact of housing legislation. Implementation of these reforms would not only improve rental conditions for tenants, but also help to build the reputation and professionalism of landlords. More broadly, it would encourage institutional investment in the provision of rental accommodation, enhancing the important role of this sector in the wider economy."

Notes for Editors

The Law Commission is a non-political independent body, set up by Parliament in 1965 to keep all the law of England and Wales under review, and to recommend reform where it is needed.

For further details on this project, and the full programme of housing reform, visit

http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/housing_renting.htm
http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/housing_disputes.htm
http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/renting_homes.htm.

The completion of this project marks the end of Professor Martin Partington's time with the Commission. He will maintain a close interest in the progress of these proposals.

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