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Y Gweinidog Tai, Adfywio a Threftadaeth
Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-320
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/05334/11

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee

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19 July 2011

Dear William

P-04-320 - Social Housing Policy

Thank you for your letter of 29 June regarding the 45 signature petition from Adam Brown on social housing policy in Wales in relation to the indigenous population.

Local authorities, in conjunction with Housing Associations/Registered Social Landlords are statutorily responsible for meeting the housing needs of the local population. They are required by law to allocate housing to applicants in accordance with a published allocation scheme, which is available to members of the public. Social landlords are responsible for setting their own rules governing such schemes and the Welsh Ministers cannot intervene in the allocation of social housing, provided those allocation policies remain within the law and are carried out in accordance with published guidance.

Local authorities are required to comply with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) and the Welsh Government's *Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness*. Registered Social Landlords must comply with the Welsh Government's *Regulatory Code for Housing Associations in Wales*.

A Welsh Government report published in 2009 entitled *The effects of recent migration on local authorities' allocation of housing and actions under homelessness legislation* found that the net pressures created by migration on access to social housing were not as great as public perceptions.


The report made recommendations on the importance of local authorities raising awareness on allocations amongst local communities, producing allocations schemes which are easy to access and understand and publish information about lettings.

In the light of these findings and other legislative changes, we have recently reviewed the *Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness*. This document sets out guidelines that local authorities should follow when drafting their allocation policies for social housing. The consultation on the revised Code of Guidance closed on 30 June and the responses are currently being analysed by my officials.

The new draft Code of Guidance recommends that local authorities consult more with local residents when developing allocation policies and also feed back to residents on who is being housed. The draft Code reinforces the flexibilities local authorities have within the allocation legislation to meet local pressures. They are able to take other factors into account when prioritising applicants such as waiting time and local connection. However the new Code will remind local authorities and registered social landlords that their policies must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and for this reason we will be urging them to carry out Equality Impact Assessments.

We anticipate that the final Code of Guidance will be available before the end of this financial year and that local authorities will revise their allocation policies accordingly.

I hope this information will be of some assistance to you and the Petitions Committee.

Your Sincerely


Huw Lewis AC / AM

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