



North Tyneside Council

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PH/JL

1st December 2022

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling up Housing & Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Thank you for your letter dated 19 November 2022. Like you we were shocked to read about the tragic death of Awaab Ishak and our thoughts are with his family.

Maintaining high Housing Standards is a key priority in North Tyneside and we want to continue to make sure that we do all we can to ensure that residents are supported to live safely in homes of any tenure.

Our Public Protection Service, including our Environmental Health Officers, sit within our Public Health Directorate putting the health of our residents at the heart of our approach to private sector housing. We are fortunate to have Health Visitors who are employed directly by the local authority also under the Public Health Directorate ensuring a close working relationship and clear processes for information sharing and following up on poor housing conditions and the impact they have on our residents.

Our private homeowners have benefitted through our innovative North Tyneside Warmzone partnership where we worked together to fund and install energy efficiency measures in over 20,000 homes across the borough helping make homes easier to heat for our residents. Since March 2021 the Authority has secured £8m in grant funding to install energy efficiency and generation measures in almost 900 homes in the Borough, covering both our Council owned homes and private homes owners.

We also work with Landlords and provide proactive advice on how to provide good services to tenants. This includes working with the Landlords Association.

Please find below additional details you have requested about our work in the private rented sector.

RESPONSE - HOUSING STANDARDS IN RENTED PROPERTIES IN ENGLAND

1. *supply the department with an assessment of damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties in your area, including the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards;*

Assessment of damp and mould 2022 to date:

2022 to present	
Category 1	Category 2
0	53

2. *supply the department with an assessment of action you have identified that may need to be taken in relation to damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties in your area.*

Assessment of Actions:

31% of complaints received to date have included damp and mould as part of the complaint. The investigation procedure is as follows:

- On receipt of the complaint, a visit is made where an informal inspection is carried out to assess the property and determine actions necessary to resolve any disrepair or damp and mould.
- The landlord/Agent is contacted and informed of actions necessary to resolve the complaint.
- The landlord/Agent are provided with a time period to carry out any repairs/actions to address the issues noted during the inspection, normally 28 days is provided.
- For potential category 1 hazards where there is a higher risk to health, a formal HHSRS inspection visit will be made within 7 days.
- Where there are occupants considered to be vulnerable due to health/age then they will be considered higher priority and a visit made within 2 working days.

Areas where the housing tenure indicates that the properties may suffer from damp and mould will have targeted action. This will include for a leaflet drop to provide advice and signposting to agencies/organisations providing help and support.

In addition, pursuant to your duties under section 3(3) of the Act, I would like you to provide the following data covering your last three 12 monthly reporting periods for privately rented properties in your area:

1. *how many damp and mould hazards you have remediated, compared to your assessment of the prevalence of these hazards;*

Year	No. of Damp and Mould Complaints	Category 1 Hazards	Remediated	Category 2 Hazards	Remediated/ Resolved	Under current Investigation
2022 to date	53	0	0	53	37	15
2021	59	0	0	59	59	0
2020	49	0	0	49	49	0

2. *how many times you have taken enforcement action to remedy damp and mould hazards and the form this has taken;*

Year	Category 1 Hazards	Category 2 Hazards
2022 to date	1*	0
2021	0	0
2020	0	0
*Section 11 Improvement Notice served for excess cold which resolved the damp/mould.		

3. *how many civil penalty notices have been issued in relation to non-compliance with enforcement action overdamp and mould hazards;*

Year	Civil Penalty Notices
2022 to date	1*
2021	0
2020	0
*Under consideration for breach of S11 Improvement Notice but relating to excess cold giving rise to damp and mould.	

4. *how many prosecutions have been successfully pursued in relation to damp and mould hazards.*

Year	Prosecutions
2022 to date	0
2021	0
2020	0

Finally, I would also like you to set out how you are prioritising enforcement of housing standards more generally in your authority, across all tenures, including what plans you have to ensure adequate enforcement capacity to drive up standards in the private rented sector.

Proactive work is undertaken to identify areas of concern. All potential category 1 hazards are prioritised and given a specific case officer who will oversee the case from start to finish and be a point of contact for the resident throughout. Very few formal actions have been required in recent years as officers have worked with landlords to ensure the issues are resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of the resident.

In some of priority regeneration areas we have been actively intervening in the market to buy poorer quality homes and bring them up to the Decent Homes Standard providing new affordable rented accommodation. We have also used Empty Dwelling Management Orders and Private Sector Lease and Repair schemes.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we could work together to deliver further improvements in the private rented housing sector in North Tyneside as we believe good quality housing is key to the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Yours sincerely



Paul Hanson
Chief Executive