

The Rt Hon David Cameron MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Dear Prime Minister,

The implementation of the changes to Benefit entitlement relating to under-occupancy, (popularly known as the Bedroom Tax) are now almost upon us. Repeated attempts to influence and change the policy have not been listened to. I am, therefore, writing to register formally, in the strongest terms, the New Charter Group's opposition to these changes.

Since these changes were proposed we have known that the impact of them will not only be unfair but also incompetent.

They will have a significantly adverse effect on homes; livelihoods and communities. Tenants are telling us that they are very worried not only about being able to meet household bills, but also the prospect of being forced out of what is more than a house - it is their **home**.

So, how can it be fair that:

- People who need medical equipment in their home are affected?
- Homes that have adaptations for disabled people are affected?
- Couples who can't share a bedroom because of medical reasons are affected?
- Separated parents sharing custody of children are affected which could lead to further family breakdown?
- People who are doing their best to find work are affected?

Equally they are incompetent as they will not achieve the Government's objective of better use of social housing, and in forcing a migration to the private sector will increase rather than reduce the Housing Benefit bill.

We have communicated with Government on this issue and have let Lord Freud know about the impact, but sound practical advice has been ignored. At the same time we have worked incredibly hard to not only let our tenants know about the proposed changes but also to help them meet such a fundamental change. The short term, limited nature of Discretionary Housing Payment will not be a solution.

My challenge to you is to ask whether you are aware of the practical impact that the broad policy will have. In your speech to the Conservative Party Conference last October you stated that your brand of compassionate conservatism is not just for the strong but is also the best way to help the poor, the weak and the vulnerable. In all honesty can you stand behind that statement when the impact of these changes hits the poor, weak and vulnerable in the way that it does?

I am, therefore, asking you to consider the changes which are proposed. The opportunity for you to take positive action is still there. Doing so would demonstrate to the nation that your Government does indeed have at its heart the interests of all it serves. Failure to do so can only lead to an impact which will be far reaching, and potentially very harmful to individuals; neighbourhoods and community cohesion.

Yours sincerely



Ian Munro  
Group Chief Executive