

Private Rented Sector Strategy and Reform Division
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
By email only: TenancyReform@communities.gov.uk

11 October 2019

Dear Madam or Sir,

Re: Response to A New Deal For Renting consultation

Please find enclosed a response to the consultation on behalf of the Society of Labour Lawyers' housing sub-group.

The Society of Labour Lawyers is the legal think tank of the Labour Party. It is the pre-eminent professional association for lawyers on the left of politics and supports the Labour Party in developing legal policy and advising on legal proposals.

We welcome the government's commitments as set out in the consultation paper. In August last year we responded to the Labour Party's green paper *Housing For The Many*, in which we encouraged the Labour Party to abolish section 21. We were therefore delighted when both the Labour Party and the government committed to that proposal, and we are very pleased that ending 'no-fault' evictions is now a policy that enjoys a cross-party consensus.

In summary:

- We strongly support the abolition of 'section 21' evictions and assured shorthold tenancies;
- We oppose the continuing existence of fixed-term tenancies, which – in our view – is inconsistent with the abolition of shorthold tenancies and the section 21 mechanism;
- We oppose the continuing existence of 'break clauses' for exactly the same reason;
- We support the re-introduction of a fairly-balanced 'returning owner occupier' ground;
- We oppose mandatory rent arrears grounds given the prevalence of Universal Credit-related arrears;
- We oppose judicial consideration of possession matters on the papers; and

- We consider that private landlords are poorly-placed to intervene in situations of domestic violence and abuse.

Yours faithfully,

Society of Labour Lawyers' housing sub-group

For further information please contact nick.bano@1mcb.com or lizd@gclaw.co.uk