

7 January 2021

Robert Jenrick MP  
Secretary of State of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to you on behalf of Unite the Union to express our deep concern regarding the situation of renters up and down the country, who are facing unknown consequences from the expiration of the eviction ban on 11<sup>th</sup> January. The ban is due to end despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, a new national lockdown, and the wide-reaching economic. The Government must take immediate steps to extend the eviction ban, and give renters the security they need at this distressing time. As you know, the Scottish Government have now agreed to extend the ban until the end of March, and we are urging you to follow suit. The current lack of clarity for those potentially facing eviction is unacceptable and unnecessary, and is taking a devastating toll on many people's mental health in what is already an extremely difficult time. Furthermore, given the extremely high number of cases across the UK, bailiffs should not be allowed to enter homes as this would place even more members of the public at risk.

Indeed, given the current situation, it is high time that the Government follows through on its election pledge from the 2019 General Election and scraps Section 21 once and for all.

Moreover, truly stopping this public health crisis from triggering a housing crisis means going much further. The Government needs to take bold action to address the underlying factors that are driving the housing crisis.

The Government must initiate an immediate rent freeze alongside a much-needed increase in housing allowance. This would provide support for individuals as well as struggling local economies. Those who have accrued rent arrears due to the impacts of Covid-19 on their income and employment should also be given immediate relief. The burden of this debt should be shared equally among landlords, the state, and tenants.

It is also vital that you also take this opportunity to address the deeper underlying inequality in UK housing, which has been getting progressively worse over the last decade and has now been exposed for all to see.

Our local governments must be adequately funded so they can undertake the massive social housing programme that is so long overdue. We also need stricter regulations on landlords and letting agents who exploit tenants with extortionate rents, high fees, dangerously ill-maintained properties, and insecure tenancies. With more and more people unable to get a foot on the property ladder, addressing the failings and inequities of the rental sector is becoming ever more vital and urgent.

Finally, the Government ran the very successful 'Everyone In' emergency policy in March of last year, at the beginning of the lockdown. We are extremely concerned that there is no plan to restart the scheme now, when cases are so high and temperatures so low. We urge you to think again, and act to get Everyone (Back) In, to protect them from the virus and freezing temperatures.

People have a fundamental right to the security of a safe and liveable home, and the fact that so many do not have such security is a terrible indictment of our society, which remains one of the wealthiest in the world. Especially now, with so many making economic sacrifices for our collective wellbeing and facing toughening personal circumstances, the need for both urgent measures to address the Covid-related housing crisis and a long term housing strategy in this country has never been greater.

We urge the Government to take immediate action and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Len McCluskey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

LEN McCLUSKEY  
**General Secretary**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Grahame Morris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

GRAHAME MORRIS  
**MP**