

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Dear Secretary of State

As the largest councillor group on Bristol City Council, we write to you on behalf of our residents to voice concerns about delays to the Renters Reform Bill and the long-awaited removal of section 21, which is unlikely to happen now before the next General Election.

We also urge you to consider an amendment to the bill which we believe will help to reduce the number of people claiming homelessness duties because of the end of a private rented sector tenancy.

Since your Government's promise in 2019 to abolish section 21, many Bristolians have been evicted through no fault of their own. Section 21 evictions are a leading cause of statutory homelessness – many renters are unable to find new accommodation in the two months available after being served an S21 eviction and end up being housed in temporary accommodation at the expense of already underfunded and overburdened local authorities.

While we welcome your commitment to eventually end section 21, the recent reported concessions made to backbench Conservative MPs mean that no fault evictions will continue to hang over the heads of the majority of renters up to and beyond the next election, as they will only be abolished for new tenancies.

Moreover, as currently drafted, the bill retains two-month notice periods for tenants under the new 'no fault' eviction grounds – when a landlord wishes to sell or to move family in.

As the bill continues to make its way through Parliament, we urge you to consider amending the legislation so that tenants have four months' notice if they are being evicted through no fault of their own in the new tenancy regime.

We believe this small but important change will give tenants more security and time to find a new home which suits their needs in the event they are evicted, and consequently reduce the number of people claiming homelessness support following the end of a private tenancy, lessening the impact of evictions on local government finances.

In Bristol, we have also heard of landlords using section 21 to threaten tenants with eviction unless extortionate rent increases are agreed to. They will continue to abuse this law to increase their income until the Renters (Reform) Bill is passed and no fault evictions are finally abolished. We urge you to do everything you can to make sure the bill is amended and put into force as soon as possible - and that following the Bill's passing, section 21 evictions are abolished as soon as possible for new *and existing* tenancies.

Thank you for considering this request.

Cllr Lisa Stone,
Cllr Carla Denyer
Cllr Patrick McAllister,
Cllr Barry Parsons,
Cllr Tim Wye,
Cllr Ed Plowden,
Cllr Lorraine Francis
Cllr Jenny Bartle
Cllr James Crawford
Cllr Martin Fodor
Cllr Ani Stafford-Townsend
Cllr David Wilcox
Cllr Mohamed Makawi
Cllr Heather Mack
Cllr Emma Edwards
Cllr Yassin Mohamud
Cllr Tom Hathway,
Cllr Christine Townsend,
Cllr Tony Dyer,
Cllr Paula O'Rourke