



# Gas Access Campaign offers to share research with Housing Minister

**20 October 2014**

GAS safety campaigners are calling for a meeting with the housing minister to help him fully understand the unnecessarily wasted millions spent on gaining access to homes.

The call comes after housing minister Brandon Lewis revealed the Department of Communities and Local Government hasn't carried out any research into the costs to housing associations, forced to secure court orders as a last resort, in gaining access to a properties to carry out annual gas safety checks.

Figures from the [Gas Access Campaign](#), being spearheaded by Home Group, the Association of Gas Safety Managers and CORGI Technical Services, suggest the issue is one which costs the social housing sector £50m each year.

Mark Henderson, Home Group chief executive, said: "Mr Lewis has acknowledged his department isn't aware of the wasted millions spent each year in the sector because of this issue. We have done the research and we'd like to have a meeting with the Minister where we'd be happy to share our findings.

"The costs involved in lengthy court action combined with the significant numbers of tenants who refuse social landlords access may not be immediately obvious. However the level of response to the campaign speaks volumes, housing associations representing more than 1 million homes have signed up.

"Gas access costs the sector £50m each year. In a time of austerity this money could be used to build more homes or to finance some of the valuable work associations carry out in communities throughout the country.

"This is an issue which risks lives, the lives of tenants who refuse access and the lives of their neighbours. It could be resolved very simply with an amendment to a couple of paragraphs of legislation."

Mr Lewis provided a written Parliamentary response to Hyndburn MP Graham Jones which acknowledged DCLG officials have conducted no research into the issue.



At present it can take as long as four months for social landlords to gain legal access. The campaign is lobbying for a change in the law which would allow legal access within 24 hours – the time taken for local authorities to gain access.

Claire Heyes, chief executive of the AGSM said: “We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Minister to explain the statistics about the large amount of money being wasted in the social housing sector.

“Carrying out the landlord's safety checks is crucial to raising standards in gas safety, but there is an easier and cheaper way to do this than the current system. The support that this campaign is receiving reflects the concern of management in social housing. We urge the Minister to meet with us to discuss the way forward.”

To sign up to the campaign and put your name to a petition calling on the Government to alter the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998 visit: [www.gasaccesscampaign.org.uk](http://www.gasaccesscampaign.org.uk)

**ENDS**

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### **The Association of Gas Safety Managers**

The Association of Gas Safety Managers (AGSM) is for managers in Social Housing and Facilities Management organisations who are responsible for all aspects of gas safety. The Association was been set up by CORGI in response to a demand from gas managers for a professional Association which can address industry issues with key stakeholders and create one voice from the sector to key government



departments. It also provides members with support, networking opportunities, training and many other benefits. All members are undertaking or have completed CORGI's Level 4 VRQs in Gas Safety Management or have an equivalent level of qualification or experience and collectively look after the gas safety management of nearly two million homes across the country. [www.agsm.uk.com](http://www.agsm.uk.com)