



Housing minister challenged over cost of gas access

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A GOVERNMENT minister has been challenged to assess the impact of current gas safety legislation on social housing providers.

Housing and Planning minister Brandon Lewis MP has been asked to provide a written Parliamentary response on what research his department has conducted into the costs to social housing providers who are refused access to inspect gas appliances by tenants.

The question has been tabled following the launch of the [Gas Access Campaign](#) which aims to achieve a change in the law to make it more efficient for social housing providers to ensure the safety of their customers and their neighbours.

The question has been posed by Hyndburn MP Graham Jones who has backed the Gas Access Campaign. He has asked: "What assessment he [Mr Lewis] has made of the costs to housing associations of implementing the legal power to enter a property to undertake a statutory gas safety check?"

The campaign is being spearheaded by Home Group, the Association of Gas Safety Managers and CORGI Technical Services. To date, 67 housing associations who collectively own more than 1m properties, have added their weight to calls for a simple change in legislation that will dramatically cut the time it takes for landlords to carry out gas safety checks.

The campaign estimates the current system of gas access will cost the sector £500m during the next 10 years.

That figure comes from estimated costs of repeated failed appointments at tenants' homes along with the legal fees involved in preparing a court case to gain a possession order on a property – currently the only option available to social landlords.

The process can take as long as four months for social landlords. Local authorities can gain court orders with 24 hours. The [Gas Access Campaign](#) aims to give social landlords equal powers.



Mark Henderson, Home Group chief executive, said: “We’ve already seen this issue is resonating with those within the sector who recognise the delays, associated costs and risks involved in not being able to gain access to properties.

“It’s heartening to see Mr Jones, who is a supporter of the campaign, asking questions of the minister. Mr Jones recognises this is an issue which affects every social housing provider in England and potentially anyone who lives in or near social housing.

“We are keen to meet with Mr Lewis to share our research and discuss what he can do to help social landlords make sure tenants remain safe in their homes.”

Claire Heyes, chief executive of the AGSM said: “The support of MPs is crucial for the Gas Access Campaign to achieve its objectives and so we very much welcome the question being tabled by Graham Jones MP. We would like to call on MPs from across the House to pledge their support and urge Mr Lewis to meet with us at the earliest opportunity 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

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CORGI Technical Services Ltd has over forty years of technical expertise in all aspects of gas safety. With comprehensive site audits, training for employees, a family of VRQ gas safety qualifications for management, gas auditors, front line housing staff and tenants, legal advice and expert witness testimony, CORGI Technical works with local authorities, housing associations, private landlords, contractors, energy suppliers and the travel industry to support them with their gas safety obligations, compliance and continued improvement. www.corgitechnical.com

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