



Shadow Housing Minister supports Gas Access Campaign

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Another high profile politician has backed a campaign aimed at improving gas safety for millions of people.

Shadow Housing Minister Emma Reynolds has pledged her support to the Gas Access Campaign. The Labour politician has acknowledged the current access system available to social landlords who need to carry out gas safety checks is both costly and potentially puts tenants in danger.

The Wolverhampton North East MP is the latest high profiler backer of the campaign following the support of London Mayor Boris Johnson.

The campaign is being spearheaded by Home Group with the Association of Gas Safety Managers and CORGI Technical Services. It aims to simplify the legal process used to gain power of entry once landlords have exhausted all other options.

Ms Reynolds said: "I support the campaign to make it easier for social landlords to conduct essential gas safety checks. There are serious risks to the health of residents if gas appliances go unchecked and it can't be right that social landlords are spending so much money to ensure their tenants are safe.

"But any new powers must be used as a last resort and clear guidance will be needed following any change. Any changes to the law must be balanced to protect the interests and privacy of tenants."

Mark Henderson, Home Group, chief executive said: "We're beginning to see true cross party support for this campaign. Politicians across the spectrum recognise the current system of gas access simply can't continue. It's costly financially and it has great potential to be costly in terms of lives.

"We're delighted Ms Reynolds has backed the campaign and we agree with her view that any new power of entry should be balanced. We're pushing for a very simple change in legislation which would speed up the court process once every other avenue has been exhausted."

The issue is estimated to cost the sector £50m each year. Currently local authorities are able to apply to a court to gain lawful entry into homes within 24 hours of refusal by a tenant. Housing associations can take as long as four months to legally gain entry to a property.



Claire Heyes, chief executive of the AGSM said: “The support of the Shadow Housing Minister is very welcome. Keeping tenants and their neighbours safe is a responsibility that social housing landlords take very seriously and we believe that tenants also wish to feel safe in their homes. Raising awareness across the political spectrum of the huge sums of money being wasted in achieving this level of safety is a crucial step to achieving the changes that we believe are needed.”

To sign the Gas Access petition visit: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/68910>

ENDS

For further information contact Robert Weatherall on 0191 290 7908 or email robert.weatherall@homegroup.org.uk

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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