



FPRA
FEDERATION OF PRIVATE
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

Embargo: Immediate - 00.01am Monday 25th January 2010

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National leaseholders group steps up the campaign for Independent Regulation of Managing Agents.

Federation calls on the Secretary of State to end two tier system of property management

Following a meeting of leaseholders in Chichester last Friday, Federation Chairman Bob Smytherman has written to the Secretary of State with responsibility for the private leasehold sector calling for an independent regulator for the industry, similar to the one that regulates Council housing and housing associations.

This fresh call comes following a meeting last Friday of retirement sector leaseholders in Chichester, West Sussex which was organised by the campaign group CARLEX (Campaign Against Retirement Leasehold EXploitation) and attended by over 100 leaseholders along with representative from the industry and the local MP.

Speaking after the meeting, Bob Smytherman said:

"I was appalled to hear so many accounts of elderly leaseholders being ignored by managing agents and property managers when all they were asking for was answers to how their money was being spent and being told that if they set up a residents association they would not be seen as a representative group by their managing agent, despite this being included in the code of practice by the Association of the Retirement Housing Managers (ARHM) who are responsible

for enforcing high standards in the management of private retirement and sheltered housing by their members."

"It's quite clear that the industry are either unable or unwilling to regulate themselves and it is now time that the private sector should be brought in-line with that of the social housing sector and be accountable to a truly independent regulator and not one that is effectively a trade body defending their members rather than standing up for the rights of leaseholders."

"Last year representatives from a variety of professional and leaseholder groups including the FPRA met twice with Civil Servants from the Department of Communities and Local Government to work on a scheme of independent regulation for managing agents and today we now calling on all political parties to commit to regulating the industry before the next General Election."

Ends

Federation of Private Residents' Associations are a not-for-profit advice, support and lobbying organisation for private residential leaseholders, tenants' and residents' associations, and residential management companies. We are the national voice of residents' associations and are frequently consulted by government.

Our advisory services are free to members, who pay an annual subscription fee.

The FPRA encourages leaseholders to set up residents' associations and publishes a guide on how to do it.

The FPRA offers its members specialist legal, insurance, management, and building guidance.

The FPRA represents and understands the interests of both tenants' associations and resident management companies.

The FPRA keeps its members informed about current issues and events affecting leaseholders.

The FPRA publishes a quarterly 12 page newsletter for members

The FPRA publishes information guides and booklets, which are available to non-members.

The FPRA is a vital information resource for leaseholders, with articles, news, newsletters and article index, forms to download, and a discussion forum.

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Notes to Editors:

Letter to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Rt Hon John Denham MP

Dear Mr Denham,

I am writing to you following a meeting of the campaign group CARLEX (Campaign Against Retirement Leasehold EXploitation) last Friday in Chichester, West Sussex.

During the meeting which was attended by over 100 well informed leaseholders from the private retirement sector, the audience was advised that the issue of independent regulation for managing agents and property managers was unlikely to now go ahead with Government instead preferring 'self-regulation' by the various trade bodies that represent the interest of the property management sector rather than leaseholders themselves.

Last summer I represented our Federation at two meetings of 'a task and finish' group set up to look at the issue and was given the impression the Government were committed to the independent regulation of the industry which received a broad consensus from everyone present at the meetings that were held at DCLG.

What is clear to us as a representative group of leaseholders is the current system of self-regulation is not working and there is now a two-tier system of property management in this Country with the social sector fully regulated, with no such system in place for the private sector which is resulting in some leaseholders being subjected to unreasonable service charges, inflated insurance premiums by freeholders and a poor level of service by some managing agents leaving leaseholders feeling they are unable to exercise any influence with regards to the decisions that are made in the buildings which they live.

Can I now please request that your department look again at the work done by a broad range of stakeholders in the leasehold industry and come up with a scheme of independent regulation that everyone that works in property management throughout the private sector can have confidence in.

I look forward to hearing from you soon on this important matter.

Yours sincerely

Bob Smytherman
Chairman

The FPRA is a non-political, not-for-profit advice, support and lobbying organisation for our members who include private residential leaseholders, tenants' and residents' associations and residential management companies as well as those companies where the leaseholders together own the freehold of their own residential block.

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