Consultation on the proposed energy efficiency regulations under the Energy Act 2011 for the domestic private rented sector

Response of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

August 2014

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

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Private Rented Sector Energy Efficiency Regulations (Domestic) (England and Wales) Consultation

Response of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

Summary

1. The CIEH welcomes the introduction of Regulations to improve the energy efficiency of properties in the private rented sector (PRS). There are high numbers of energy inefficient properties in this sector and a disproportionate number of fuel poor households, which requires firm action by the Government.

2. But we have some fundamental concerns about the proposals. We feel that unless addressed, there are flaws in the proposals that would undermine the purpose of the Regulations, as stated in the Ministerial Foreword to the consultation document that 'no tenant is forced to rent a dangerously cold home with sky-high energy bills'.

3. For the CIEH, the key issues are:

   - We cannot support the proposal in both sets of regulations that there should be no upfront or net cost to landlords. The minimum standard should not be based on the principle of 'no net or upfront costs' to landlords. It is quite wrong, as a matter of both law and practice, that a regulatory framework should be dependent upon a set of financing mechanisms – i.e. the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation – that may not even exist in 2018. We therefore believe that all properties within scope of the regulations should be required to meet a minimum standard of EPC Band E, up to a maximum spend of £6,000. More broadly, all domestic private rented properties should be within scope of the minimum standard regulations, not just those with a valid EPC.

   - There is little or no incentive for tenants to make requests and they will find it difficult to pay for energy efficiency improvements to their landlord's properties. When they do, they may find that they are also improving the capital value of the property for their landlord. There will also be underlying concerns about upsetting the landlord and consequently not having their tenancy renewed.

   - Too many properties will be exempted under the proposals since having an EPC is the qualifying standard. Research carried out by DCLG reported that only 26% of domestic private rented properties that should have an EPC actually do, so the vast majority will be outside of the scope of the regulations. There are too many exemptions overall that will enable landlords to avoid taking action.

   - Individual units within Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) should be brought within scope of the regulations. This could be achieved by requiring an EPC *for the whole building* to be produced whenever a single unit is rented out.

- We feel that the proposals overlook Clause 43 of the Act, which specifies that financing of energy efficiency improvements can be "financed by such other description of financial arrangement as the regulations provide".

- The consultation paper (paras 115 and 117) ignores the agreed view of the DECC working party that Green Deal assessment and ancillary costs should be met by landlords.

- We are of the view that local authority responsibility for enforcement of the Regulations should rest with environmental health officers, not trading standards officers.

Domestic Tenants' Energy Efficiency Improvements

Q 1 Does the proposed scope include all the buildings and tenancies that should be covered by the tenant's improvements regulations? If not, which additional building or tenancy types should be included or excluded?

4. Provision for HMO tenants to make requests for improvements should be strengthened, particularly because of their vulnerability and the typically short-term nature of their lettings. The Regulations should require the landlord of an HMO to make improvements where the local authority makes a request on behalf of one or more of occupying tenants. The Government should also revisit the Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations so that individual rooms let in a HMO need to have an EPC.

5. Clause 1 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation (Energy Performance Certificates and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) Bill, recently considered by Parliament, would provide a means by which individual units within an HMO could be covered by an EPC and therefore the Regulations.

Q 2 What, if any, additional funding options could be used by a tenant when seeking consent for energy efficiency improvements in addition to the Green Deal finance arrangements, ECO, grant funding and a tenant's own sources?

6. We believe a fundamental weakness of the proposals is that there is insufficient incentive for tenants to instigate a request for efficiency improvements. Many PRS tenants have low incomes, especially those living in properties in the poorest condition, yet they may be expected to fund a Green Deal Assessment, EPC or qualified surveyors report in order to instigate a request. Furthermore, it is unreasonable to expect low income tenants to have to fund the improvements, as per the proposal in the consultation.

7. Whilst the Green Deal Golden Rule may theoretically prevent tenants from having to repay more than the cost of the measures, this is only likely to work for average and above average energy users. The financial circumstances of many tenants means that they substantially under-heat their homes and as a result they are at risk of not seeing the calculated energy savings.

8. We do not believe that the Regulations should only be predicated on the availability or otherwise of Green Deal or ECO. It is worth recalling that Clause 43 (4) (b) (iv) of the Act states that measures may be "financed by such other description of financial arrangement as the regulations provide".

9. The ECO is also cited as another means of funding for tenants. The HHCRO, otherwise known as the Affordable Warmth obligation, could potentially help tenants in receipt of qualifying benefits, but as stated in the NEA's evidence submitted to NICE on the subject of excess winter deaths and illnesses, only 34% of English fuel poor households are eligible for it. Furthermore the experience to date of HHCRO has been that:

    9.1 It is not universally available to tenants in receipt of qualifying benefits. This is because it depends on the preferences of the obligated energy companies. In practice they have only favoured certain property types and measures, and they will stop all funding as soon as their targets are met. HHCRO waiting lists have already emerged.

    9.2 HHCRO funding will not always cover the full cost of the work and so low income qualifying tenants will be expected to make contributions. It is of concern that the Government's recent response to comments in relation to question 34 of its consultation 'The Future of the Energy Company Obligation' states that 'we have decided not to limit customer contributions under the Affordable Warmth obligation'.

10. CERO and CSCO may also potentially help but again this depends on the preferences of the energy companies. Ironically their preference has been to invest CERO funding in the social rented sector where energy efficiency standards overall are better than the PRS.

11. Grants from local authorities are also referred to as a funding source, but there is less availability year on year of grant assistance as continuing cuts are having to be made. The Government cut the Private Sector Renewal Budget for local authorities to zero in 2011/12 – in the preceding year £317m was available. If this funding stream were still available, there would be a much better chance that local authorities could help with energy efficiency grants.

12. The general concept that there should be no upfront or net cost to the landlord and that the tenant should pay is a major departure from the general conventions that have applied to the PRS for many decades now. The DECC working party discussed at length and made recommendations to the effect that there should be no "significant" upfront costs to landlord, yet there is no mention of this in the proposals. More research could be commissioned to give definition to "significant" in this context and the CIEH would be happy to contribute to such discussions.

13. A lack of return on investment for landlords may historically have deterred landlords from investing in energy efficiency, but this is changing now. The DECC press release issued on 17 June 2013 announced that, based on research carried out, energy saving improvements could increase property values by 14 per cent on average: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/energy-saving-measures-boost-house-prices

14. The British Property Federation has also acknowledged that things may change, and has identified PRS regulation on energy efficiency as an influencing factor. In the foreword to its guide on Energy Efficiency and the PRS, the BPF stated:

    'Whilst currently there may be little evidence of a link between energy efficiency and property rental or capital values, it is possible that this may change in the coming years

as energy bills rise, information on property energy efficiency is made more prominent, local authorities take more action and the government introduces further regulation'.

15. Tenants should not be paying for energy efficiency improvements where these will consequently improve the value of the landlord's asset.

Q 3 Do you have any comments on the proposed process for when and how a tenant request for consent for energy efficiency improvements is made?

16. This is another aspect of the proposals which we feel will serve as a further disincentive for tenants, who will have to invest a significant amount of time in preparing their written submissions. Some tenants will also be reticent to make a request through fear of retaliatory eviction or non-renewal of their tenancy. The tenants' request regulations risk being undermined by the fear and reality of retaliatory eviction. The Government should therefore take the earliest possible legislative opportunity to give tenants protection from retaliatory eviction in circumstances where they have made a valid request for energy efficiency improvements. The CIEH is working with Shelter to support the Tenancies (Reform) Bill to this effect.

Q 4 Do you agree with the proposed set of circumstances in which a landlord may reasonably refuse consent to improvements, and in addition, do you agree that the regulations should also allow for landlords to make a case for a reasonable refusal on a case by case basis?

17. Many of the situations described in (a) – (j) where a landlord may withhold consent to a request are reasonable. It is not clear however why in (c) a tenant should be prevented from funding further improvements within a year of having had other improvements carried out with Green Deal finance. Also, in (f) the suggestion is that a change of space heating or cooking fuel would be a ground for refusal if it were not cost effective. Given that the tenant can only request something that has been recommended in an EPC, a Green Deal Advice Report or a qualified surveyors report, it is likely to be cost effective in terms of running costs. If the issue is about the installation cost being too high, the landlord is not going to object because the tenant is paying for it.

18. It is of concern that paragraph 73 of the consultation paper suggests that there may be a range of other reasons why a landlord can refuse consent, and that the tenant will have to go to a tribunal to get a decision. This can only serve to deter tenants from pursuing requests for improvements still further.

Q 5 Do you agree with the proposed approach for demonstrating an exemption where works would result in a material net decrease in a property's value? What would be the most appropriate way to set the threshold?

19. Previous reference has been made in the answer to Q2 to the research commissioned by DECC that led to the headline 'Making energy saving improvements to your property could increase its value by 14% on average'.

20. We would welcome further information and some practical examples circumstances where the Government considers there could potentially be a material net decrease in property value. Certainly improvements such as loft insulation and cavity wall insulation, and an efficient gas boiler or central heating system are not going to have a negative effect on value. The small reduction in room size arising from internal wall insulation

might be an issue, but the value reduction could just as easily be offset by the fact that new wall finishes are replacing old ones.

21. Overall, we see no justification for this exemption as the circumstances will be so rare; furthermore, the bureaucratic burden in proving or disproving the circumstances of the exemption would be disproportionate.

Q 6 Do you agree that freeholders should also be under a duty not to unreasonably refuse requests for energy efficiency improvements?

22. Yes.

Q 7 Do you agree with the proposed landlord's response criteria and timescales?

23. The three month timescale for the landlord's written response is acceptable, although more clarity will be needed on the minimum evidence that a landlord must provide for a range of different refusals. For instance, if a change of fuel for space heating or cooking is considered not to be cost effective, a reliable independent report should be provided to support this. The tenants' request regulations should require that the works be undertaken within one year of the request being accepted, except where a longer time period is mutually agreed between the landlord and tenant.

Q 8 Do you agree that a landlord should be permitted to make a counter-offer to a tenant's request that meets or exceeds the energy efficiency improvements requested by the tenant where there are not increased costs on the tenant?

24. Yes, provided there is no increase in cost to the tenant. However, the proposal to allow the landlord's counter-offer to be implemented without complying with PAS 2030 standards is unacceptable given that these standards will apply where tenant's requests are implemented.

Q 9 What evidence is there that a tenant could be at risk of eviction as a consequence of making a request for consent for energy efficiency measures? If it exists, how could risk of eviction be mitigated?

25. We believe that without better protection in law, tenants of irresponsible landlords will risk not having their tenancies renewed if they make a request for energy efficiency improvements. The suggestion that tenants ought to be able to alert their local authority to the fact that they have made a request and their tenancy is to be terminated is the most attractive of the options to mitigate this risk. The CIEH is working with Shelter to support the Tenancies (Reform) Bill to this effect.

26. Shelter has published several research reports on the scale of the problem of retaliatory eviction, such as can be found here and the various research references in Shelter's response to the Government's discussion paper on conditions in the PRS (April 2014): http://england.shelter.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/781587/Final_copy_of_Shelters_response_to_the_Government_Review_into_poor_conditions.pdf

Q 10 Do you have any evidence that shows the scale of the costs (including non-financial costs) and benefits associated with making a tenant request and improving the energy efficiency of a property?

27. The final Regulations will need to be very clear on which costs fall to the tenant and which to the landlord, otherwise disputes will arise. For the reasons stated in the answer to question 2, the proposal that tenants should pay for improvements to their landlord's property is not supported. The proposals have not acknowledged the recommendations of the DECC working party that Green Deal assessment and ancillary costs should be the responsibility of the landlord. It is particularly unreasonable that the many low income tenants that live in the PRS properties that are most in need of improvement should have to pick up these costs.

Q 11 Do you consider that the First-tier Tribunal is the appropriate body to hear and determine appeals about decisions denying a tenant consent for energy efficiency improvements? Do you consider that the General Regulatory Chamber Rules of the First-tier Tribunal will suit the handling of these appeals? If not, what tribunal could be used?

28. Yes.

Q 12 Do you have any comments regarding the tenant's improvements regulations, not raised elsewhere in the consultation?

29. Paragraph 87 of the consultation paper refers to the potential role of local authorities in supporting tenants with their requests for energy efficiency improvements and acknowledges that 'there are many vulnerable people with support needs in the PRS for who such help will be invaluable'. The Government will need to make funding available to local authorities to enable them to provide this support. Local authorities are having to make continuing cuts to services and unless additional funding is made available there are not likely to be many that will be able to provide this support.

30. Paragraphs 98 and 99 of the consultation paper describe the anticipated relationship between the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and the tenant's improvement regulations. It is reassuring to see that a notice requiring compliance with the HHSRS will take primacy over a tenant's request.

31. Given the cost implications of pursuing a request for energy efficiency improvements themselves, it may well be that tenants who are sufficiently motivated to improve their living conditions will prefer instead to raise a complaint with the local authority where they feel that enforcement action is needed to address a HHSRS Category 1 hazard. In these circumstances we believe that HHSRS should have similar primacy in terms of the funding of improvements, with the full costs falling to the landlord.

Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard Regulations

Q 13 Do you agree with the proposed scope of buildings and tenancies for the minimum standard regulations? If not, what additional building or tenancy types should be included or excluded?

32. Paragraph 105 of the consultation paper does not make it entirely clear which types of HMO are proposed to be covered by the minimum standard regulations. Cross referencing to paragraph 46 suggests that hostels will not be covered, if this is actually the case then this ought to be re-considered.

33. Paragraph 105 of the consultation paper says that in order for the regulations to apply to an HMO 'the property must also have an EPC'. This would mean that an HMO that has not been sold since the EPC requirements came into effect in 2008 does not have to comply. It also suggests that if an HMO has been sold since 2008 but the owner has never obtained an EPC, then it is also exempt. Later in the paragraph it is stated that HMOs let on a joint tenancy (e.g. shared houses for students) will need to have an EPC when let but again the implication is that if the landlord has chosen not to get an EPC then it will be exempt.

34. We believe there is a danger that irresponsible landlords may seek to avoid the minimum standard regulations by not obtaining an EPC. Taking into account that there is very little enforcement of the EPC requirements by Trading Standards departments, irresponsible landlords have nothing to lose and everything to gain by not getting an EPC.

35. Research carried out by DCLG reported that only 26% of domestic private rented properties that should have an EPC actually have one, so this means that the vast majority will be outside of the scope of the regulations.

36. Greater clarity is required on this aspect of the proposals – such clarity could be achieved were the approach suggested by Clause 1 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation (Energy Performance Certificates and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) Bill, currently before Parliament; this would provide a means by which individual units within an HMO could be covered by an EPC and therefore the Regulations.

Q 14 Do you agree that where a property falls below an E EPC rating, the landlord would only be required to make those improvements which could be made at no net or upfront costs, i.e. those that meet the "Golden Rule", that the cost of the work, including finance costs, should not exceed the expected savings taking into account any grant funding or ECO? For those properties that do not meet an E EPC rating, do you have any suggestions for how the process could be streamlined?

37. We regard this as a significant weakness of the proposals, one that would seriously undermine the stated purpose of the legislation and reinforce the inequalities that exist between conditions in the PRS and the rest of the housing sector. The proposal that the landlord of an F or G rated property will only be required to make improvements that can be achieved at no net or upfront costs is not supported.

38. We cannot support a situation where a landlord could legitimately carry on renting out a property that is below the required minimum E rating for five years, simply because they may be able to demonstrate that they have done as much as they can within the Golden Rule. The only situation where a landlord should be exempted from the minimum E rating requirement is where it can be proven that the tenant or other relevant third parties have withheld consent and the landlord has taken all reasonable steps to gain consent. We would propose a maximum of one year.

39. F or G rated properties will commonly have Category 1 HHSRS hazards present, and it is wholly unacceptable that landlords would be allowed by the minimum standard regulations to let these health and safety hazards persist on the grounds that they should not have to incur any costs.

40. We have welcomed the statements in Paragraphs 98 and 99 which describe the anticipated relationship between the HHSRS and the tenant's improvement regulations, particularly that a notice requiring compliance with the HHSRS will take primacy over a tenant's request. We believe this same primacy should be established for funding of improvements bringing a property up to an E rating.

41. It is also unacceptable that a landlord will be able to carry out work to achieve a minimum E rating using Green Deal finance and the cost will have to be met by the tenant where they are the electricity bill payer. Whilst the theory of the Golden Rule is that the costs will not be more than the savings, tenants who under-heat their homes may find that the calculated savings are not achieved and they end up being financially disadvantaged.

42. In relation to paragraph 113 of the consultation document, we do not believe that retaining the paperwork to prove that works have been carried out is sufficient; we feel third-party certification is required.

Q 15 How should the principle of 'no upfront costs' apply to Green Deal Assessments?

43. We do not agree that it should.

Q 16 Do you have any evidence that shows the scale of the costs and benefits (including non-financial costs and benefits) associated with improving the energy efficiency of a property, for example, time taken to undertake cost effective improvements?

44. Landlords should be required to meet all reasonable ancillary costs associated with compliance with the minimum standard regulations. Some of the benefits associated with improving the energy efficiency of a property have been considered in the study commissioned by DECC:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/207196/20130613_-_Hedonic_Pricing_study_-_DECC_template__2_.pdf

45. The Energy Saving Trust also published research in 2010 onto the cost of treating F and G rated homes:
http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Publications2/Housing-professionals/Refurbishment/F-G-banded-homes-in-Great-Britain-research-into-costs-of-treatment

46. The British Property Federation's publication 'Energy Efficiency and the Private Rented Sector' provides worked examples of energy efficiency improvements and the impacts on EPC ratings and fuel bills that these will have:
http://www.bpf.org.uk/en/files/event_related_documents/Energy_Efficiency_and_the_Private_Rented_Sector.pdf

Q 17 Do you agree with the proposed method for demonstrating an exemption where works would result in a material net decrease in a property's value? What would be the most appropriate way to set the threshold?

47. The process described for demonstrating that energy efficiency improvements would devalue a property seems unnecessary given that the Government's stated view in

paragraph 118 of the consultation paper is that it would be highly unlikely that energy efficiency improvements would devalue a property.

48. It is hard to imagine the circumstances where devaluation would occur. To instigate a burdensome bureaucracy to regulate this exemption would be costly and unjustified. We would not support an exemption in these cases.

Q 18 Does the proposed consents exemption strike the right balance between recognising existing landlord obligations, whilst also ensuring that the allowance is not used as a loophole to avoid undertaking improvements? Do you have any views on how beneficial owner consents should be taken into account?

49. There will be circumstances where a landlord is prevented from making energy efficiency improvements because other parties have not provided the necessary consent. It is right that the landlord should have to evidence how consent has been denied, but difficulties will arise where the third party cannot be found or simply refuses to respond.

50. Complexities will occur where conditional consent is given but the landlord does not wish to proceed on this basis. Local authorities will need very clear guidance from Government on these matters if they are to make decisions on whether an exemption from the minimum standard regulations is justified.

Q 19 Do you think that the regulations should have a phased introduction applying only to new tenancies from 1 April 2018? Do you agree the regulations should also have a backstop, applying to all tenancies from 1 April 2020? If not, what alternatives do you suggest?

51. The regulations should have a phased introduction from 1 April 2018 as suggested and this should be accompanied by a backstop that applies the regulations to all current and new tenancies from 1 April 2020. But we would like to see further information about how this is to be enforced.

Q 20 Should the minimum standard regulations apply upon tenancy renewals where a valid EPC exists for the property?

52. The renewal of a tenancy should be a trigger for the minimum standard regulations to apply from 1 April 2018 onwards. It should not be conditional upon whether a property has an EPC – see answer to question 13 on this.

Q 21 Do you agree that an exemption for properties below an E rating should last for five years, apart from where it relates to tenant consent not being given, where it should expire at the end of a tenancy if before five years?

53. The exemption from complying with the minimum E rating described in paragraphs 106 – 108 of the consultation paper is not supported; nor is the five year duration of the exemption. Properties rated F or G will commonly have Category 1 HHSRS hazards present, and it is wholly unacceptable that landlords would be allowed by the minimum standard regulations to let these health and safety hazards persist for a period of five years.

Q 22 What would be a reasonable timescale for a landlord to seek to meet the standard or demonstrate an exemption when the backstop applies to all tenancies?

54. Landlords should be required to meet the minimum standard before the backstop date and should retain evidence of third-party certificated exemptions.

Q 23 Do you agree that the Government should set a trajectory of standards beyond 2018, and if so, how and when should this be done?

55. The Government should already have set the trajectory for standards beyond 2018 and should be consulting on the specific details now. The proposal for a review to be undertaken first by a cross Government-industry working group will lead to significant delays in setting the standards and is unacceptable. We do not agree with the proposal in paragraph 157. Landlords need certainty in their forward investment strategies.

56. We would support the achievement of Band D by 2022 and Band C by 2026.

Q 24 Do you consider where a property has a valid exemption for letting below an E EPC rating that certification of compliance would be helpful? If so, should this be voluntary or mandatory? Do you have any other comments regarding compliance and how local authorities could be supported with enforcement, for example identifying landlords?

57. The suggestion of a mandatory requirement to obtain local authority validation of exemption is supported.

58. We believe the enforcement of the regulations should rest with the environmental health or housing teams that carry out other housing enforcement functions. The primary purpose of housing enforcement functions is to raise property standards, i.e. entirely consistent with the purpose of the minimum standards regulations. In contrast, Trading Standards have a consumer protection role. Although Trading Standards have responsibility for EPC enforcement, there is little evidence that this work has been prioritised over the years. Trading Standards Teams are under pressure to deliver their core consumer protection functions and in this context EPC enforcement is not often seen as a priority.

59. The commitment by the Government to fund the cost of enforcement work by local authorities is welcomed. A pro-active approach to enforcement is required, with local authorities actively raising awareness amongst the landlord community and positively enforcing the standards to maximise compliance. If insufficient funding is made available to local authorities, enforcement activity is likely to be reactive only i.e. responding to complaints and little more.

60. Proving whether a landlord's property has a legitimate exemption from the minimum standards is likely to be complex and time consuming and sufficient funding needs to be made available for this too. In this context it is important to minimise exemptions and Government should seek to keep the administrative burden of these regulations for local authorities down to a minimum. It might be possible to make use of the Tenancy Deposit database (which is believed to cover over 80% of all rented property) to aid identification of properties for this purpose.

61. Identifying landlords is always challenging and so it is also welcome news that the Government is looking at open and cost effective access to EPC data. At the moment the process of accessing the data is unnecessarily bureaucratic and costly.

62. Local authorities would be helped further if mandatory registration was introduced for the PRS. It would also help those enforcing the minimum standards if they were able to access all relevant benefits data to help identify private rented lettings – whilst local authorities can currently use Housing Benefit data for legitimate housing enforcement activities, this needs to be possible too when Universal Credit is introduced. The CIEH supports a national register of landlords, which would be of great assistance in establishing how many landlords have complied by the 2020 date.

Q 25 Do you agree that the penalty for non-compliance should be linked to the rent level for the property and the time period of non-compliance? Should there be a minimum penalty for all cases of non-compliance? Should a maximum penalty be applied where the amount of rent is not evidenced? If not, what alternatives do you suggest?

63. It is agreed that the penalty for non-compliance should be based on the rent level for the property and the period of non-compliance. The minimum fine for all cases should be £1000 as suggested, but the penalty for non-compliance with the minimum standards should be a fixed fine of £8,000. This would be more appropriate for irresponsible landlords who have actively sought to avoid the requirements for a sustained period of time. Where the rent is not evidenced, the local authority should be able to assume a reasonable rent level based on professional advice and then use this to set the penalty.

Q 26 Do you consider that the First-tier Tribunal is the appropriate body to hear and determine appeals about decisions regarding non-compliance with the minimum standard regulations? Do you consider that the General Regulatory Chamber Rules of the First-tier Tribunal will suit the handling of these appeals? If not, what tribunal could be used?

64. Yes, there is no viable alternative.

Q 27 Do you have any comments not raised under any of the above questions?

65. It is important that the Government should organise a national publicity campaign to raise tenants', landlords' and lettings agents' awareness, as well as that of local authorities of the new requirements. At present, we believe there is little awareness among affected parties.

66. Paragraph 131 of the consultation paper says that a property will be exempt from the minimum standard if the tenant fails the credit checks for Green Deal finance and no other funding sources are available. This is unacceptable – significant numbers of PRS tenants may have had financial difficulties in the past and they should not be made to endure a cold home and high heating costs because of this.

Q 28 Do you have any comments or evidence regarding the consultation impact assessment that could inform the final impact assessment, for example the average length of void periods?

67. None at this stage.