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The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
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Our Ref: MP12962

3 June 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you in your role as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding the issue of furniture poverty and the impact that this can have on vulnerable people.

I have recently had the pleasure of working with End Furniture Poverty and learnt that in the South of England, as much as 9% of the population are living without essential furniture and white goods. In total, there will be significant sums of people across the region who are living without a socially acceptable standard of living; without a bed for their child, a cooker to prepare meals, or a washing machine to remain hygienic.

As you may be aware, EFP has found that 6 million people, 9% of the UK population are living in furniture poverty. Those with disabilities are twice as likely to experience furniture poverty, and social housing tenants four times as likely to be living in furniture poverty. Over 1 million adults are living in 'deep furniture poverty' where they are missing 3 or more essential furniture items. In turn, only 3% of social housing properties are let as furnished or part furnished, compared to 29% in the private rental sector.

Living without essential furniture items can have a devastating impact on physical and mental health, as well as social and financial well-being. Of those in furniture poverty, 51% of social renters reported extremely or very negative impacts on their physical health, meanwhile 62% of social renters reported extremely or very negative impacts on their mental health. For those on low incomes, furniture and white goods are likely to be some of the most expensive items they need to acquire, and local authorities are placed under extreme pressure trying to support families through local welfare schemes.

Some social housing tenants will have all the items that they need but for many, particularly those coming from homelessness, fleeing domestic abuse, or even simply moving from a furnished property in the private rental sector to an empty box in the social housing sector, they have nothing.

End Furniture Poverty are therefore calling for at least 10% of social homes be made available as furnished. This will address furniture poverty for the most vulnerable cohort of tenants and will free up resources from local crisis support – Local Welfare Assistance and the Crisis and Resilience Fund, for those in private rented accommodation.

I believe this target would help address the immediate needs of those most vulnerable and ensure that tenants across all housing tenures have access to the basic furniture they need to

thrive.

Whilst I know that the Government are working on a Best Practice Guide for Furniture Provision that will be included within the Decent Homes Standard, I would appreciate if you could provide a timeline by which you hope to have it published. This is of utmost importance to the six million people across the UK living in furniture poverty and I hope this can be pushed forward in the coming months. I also wish to receive reassurance that you will collaborate with End Furniture Poverty on this to ensure that the guidance offered to social landlords is able to adequately address the needs of those in furniture poverty.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, alongside End Furniture Poverty, as soon as possible to discuss how your department can help achieve the aim of at least 10% of social homes being made available as furnished. This will help some of the most vulnerable groups in our society.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this most important issue and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Manuela Perteghella MP
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