



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

John Griffiths AM
Chair
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
National Assembly for Wales

SeneddCommunities@assembly.wales

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Dear John,

During Stage 2 scrutiny of the Renting Homes (Wales) (Fees etc.) Bill, the former Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Rebecca Evans, committed to give further consideration to include Green Deal payments as a permitted payment within the Bill and said she would write to the committee about the thinking being put into a communications plan.

In respect of Green Deal payments, paragraph 7 of Schedule 1 to the Bill, as amended at Stage 2 (permitted payments in respect of provision of utilities), could be considered to be broad enough to encompass Green Deal loan repayments. However, having reflected further I recognise this may be open to interpretation when the Bill is enacted.

Leanne Wood AM tabled an amendment at Stage 2 which, among other things, sought to include Green Deal loan repayments as a permitted payment. I have been able to work with her to bring forward an amendment at Stage 3 which is consistent with the approach taken in Schedule 1 of the Bill.

In relation to a communications plan for the Bill, I support David Melding's point, made in committee when he quoted the Chartered Institute of Housing's view that "...there must be a comprehensive and clear programme of supported communication activity to ensure the public are aware of what fees incorporate and therefore what enacting this legislation could mean for those renting in the future." I also support his point about the need for any campaign to cover all parties affected by the Bill – landlords, agents, tenants, prospective tenants and contract-holders under the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.

To help ensure prospective tenants are aware of the changes, the campaign will have a broadly targeted awareness-raising element. This will include promotion of the benefits the legislation will have for those looking to rent in the private rented sector and also provide clarity about those payments, which are permitted. We plan to work with stakeholder organisations, including for example the National Union of Students and Shelter, to disseminate key information to people who already rent in the private rented sector.

Landlords and agents are also a key target audience for this campaign. It is of course essential that the implications and the date on which the legislation will take effect are well known to those who own, rent and manage properties.

Landlords and agents are already required to be registered or licensed with the licensing authority designated under section 3 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, Rent Smart Wales. We will make the most of the opportunity this brings by working closely with Rent Smart Wales by communicating the changes through stakeholders such as representative organisations and professional associations.

The campaign will begin in advance of the Bill coming into force. The success of the Bill, should it become an Act, is dependent on ensuring tenants can make informed choices and landlords and agents are aware of the law. In terms of those landlords and agents, it is also important to provide them with sufficient lead-in time to prepare for the changes.

I hope that this provides you with the further details you were seeking at this stage of the legislative process.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government