

# POLICY

# Housing

**ONE WORLD. ONE CHANCE.**

**Vote Green Party** 

**Many people find it very difficult to secure affordable accommodation that is suitable for their needs.**

**Key workers – teachers, nurses, local government workers – and people on low incomes can no longer afford to live in the communities they serve.**

**Many tenants continue to be exploited by unscrupulous landlords who charge high rents and fail to maintain housing to adequate standards.**

**Poor housing leads to health problems, the failure of children to reach their potential at school, and disjointed communities where people do not know their neighbours.**

**In the UK, one of the richest nations in the world, more than 1 million households are on council house waiting lists. Many more live in sub-standard rented accommodation.**

The Green Party would:

- Increase the availability of affordable housing through the development of more social housing.
- Ensure that everyone is provided with housing suitable for their needs.
- Provide extra support to enable the

homeless to get off the streets and into safe, comfortable and environmentally-sustainable accommodation.

- Ensure that all new homes are built to high environmental standards and make the most of renewable energy sources, and ensure that more support is available for existing homes to be properly insulated.
- Give greater support to Housing Co-operatives and Co-Housing Schemes, through measures, including easier access to finance, to enable those on lower incomes to live fulfilled lives in their communities.
- Give greater protection to tenants by tightening the rules on unscrupulous landlords.

#### **What are you going to do to reduce the impact of housing on the environment?**

New homes will be designed for low-energy use and the installation of solar panels on all new buildings will be mandatory. We will encourage the conservation of resources by removing VAT from insulation and we will make more grants available for measures that reduce energy loss from houses.

Water-saving devices will be fitted in all new and renovated buildings. We will protect the countryside and urban open spaces by introducing independent environmental impact assessments when development is proposed on greenfield sites. We will make the planning system more democratic and accessible to people.

#### **What are your policies on council housing?**

We will make funding available to local authorities so they can provide good and well-maintained council houses. The Green Party is opposed to the privatisation of ownership and/or management of social housing and we are against the transfer of council housing to ALMOs (Arms Length Management Organisations) because the system provides inadequate representation for tenants. When an ALMO exists, the Green Party will seek to ensure that tenants are able to participate meaningfully in its management, and, that the housing is returned to local authority control should the majority of tenants wish it. Public services, such as council housing, should not be funded through private finance, eg the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) because of the burden to society in the longer term. We do not support the tenants' subsidised right-to-buy scheme and we will let local

authorities decide which, if any, of its properties should be offered for sale.

#### **What will you do about homelessness?**

B&Bs and hostels are not appropriate places for people to live. The Green Party will increase the support available to homeless people, by, for example, encouraging the use of publicly-owned buildings by housing associations.

#### **What will you do for people in private rented accommodation?**

Private sector tenants will have greater protection from harassment and unfair changes to their contracts. The housing benefit system will be reformed to prevent the eviction of poorer tenants on the basis of their inability to pay.

#### **Are you opposed to people owning their own homes?**

No, a balanced mix of housing is needed, including individual and shared home ownership, leasehold, council housing, housing associations, housing co-operatives, council housing and rented accommodation in order to cater for a variety of needs and incomes.

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