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...Special Edition...



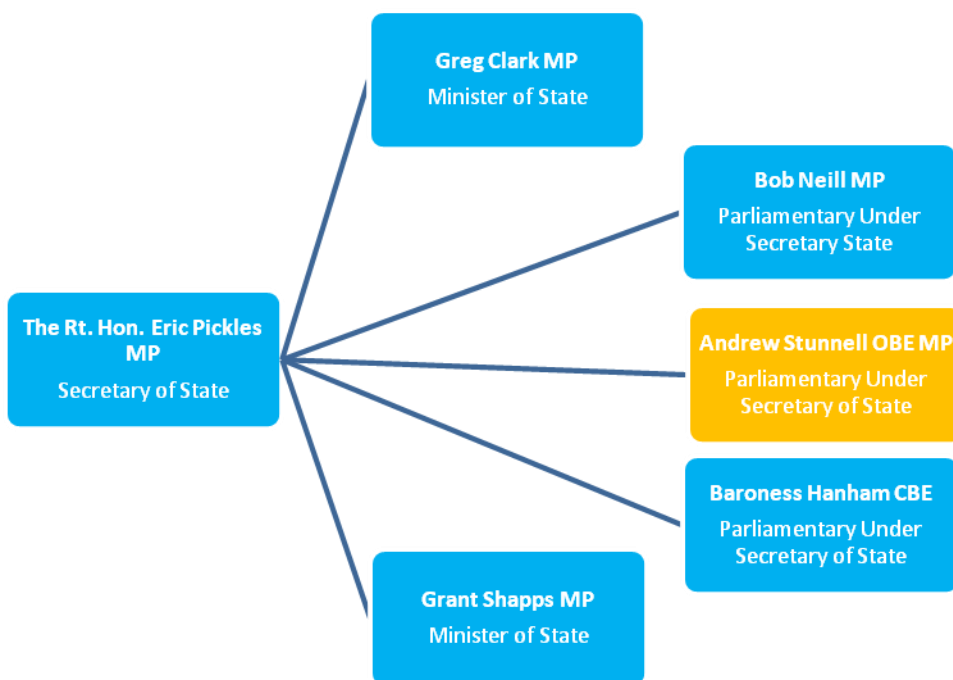
New Government: Who's Who?

Although policy which affects landlords is developed across Whitehall, there are one or two departments and ministers of key importance for the private-rented sector (PRS).

Communities and Local Government

Foremost is Communities and Local Government (CLG). This department has primary responsibility for housing and local government – among other things - and crucially is home to the Housing Minister.

Who does what at CLG?



The Secretary of State has overall responsibility for all policy decisions but can delegate certain areas of issues to Ministers of State. In the case of CLG, Eric Pickles heads up the team but is likely to leave the bulk of housing issues to his Minister of State – Grant Shapps.

Issue areas are then further passed on down the chain to junior ministers, known as Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State, who handle much of the day-to-day policy development.

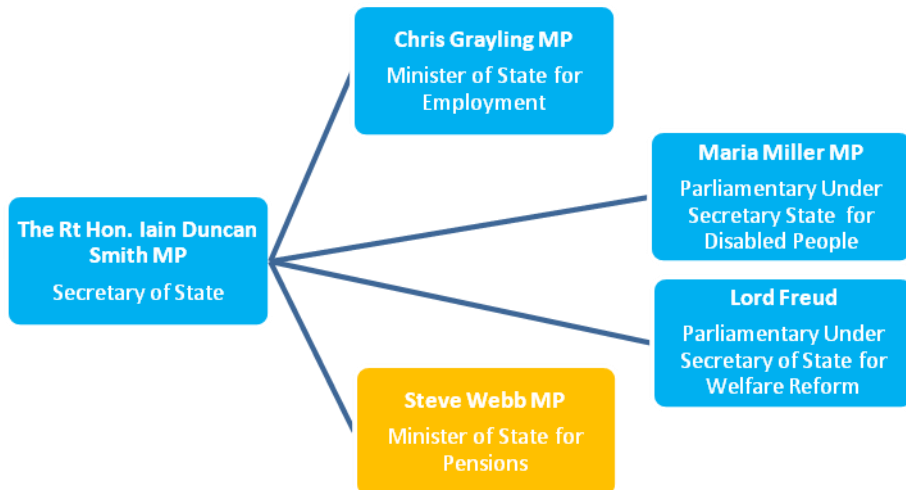
Greg Clark MP has been handed responsibility for ‘decentralisation’ while Grant Shapps MP retains the housing brief. After a series of short-term housing appointments, we welcome this initial stability and hope to continue to work constructively with Mr Shapps.

At time of writing the Department has not confirmed the remits of each junior minister. However, it is likely that Bob Neill MP will retain his pre-election planning brief, making him a key contact for the NLA in light of recent shared housing legislation which requires planning permission for new HMOs.

Work and Pensions

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), is also very important for landlords as it is ultimately responsible for the welfare state – including reform of Housing Benefit.

Who does what at DWP?



At the DWP Lord Freud is a key contact for the NLA as we attempt to hold the Conservative Party to their pre-election commitment to restore a tenant’s right to request direct payment of Local Housing Allowance to their landlord.

Priorities for the New Government?

The NLA lobbies Government across a wide range of issues. However, following a period of ‘*enthusiastic*’ policy making towards the end of the last Parliament, there are a few key areas which we wish to focus our attention straight away.

- 1. Local Housing Allowance:** last year the NLA persuaded the Conservative Party to agree to restore the tenant’s right to request direct payment of LHA to their landlord if elected. Following the General Election, the NLA is continuing work with relevant ministers to ensure that this policy is enacted. *In a recent NLA survey, 81.4 percent of landlords stated that LHA reform should be addressed as a matter of urgency.*
- 2. Planning:** following a successful campaign by NLA members, David Cameron (then, Leader of the Opposition) tabled a Parliamentary motion calling on the Government to rescind legislation requiring planning permission for new shared housing. Now in Government, the NLA intends to continue to work with the new Planning Minister to make this happen. *More than half of landlords polled saw this issue as very important for the new Government.*
- 3. Capital Gains Tax.** Following the publication of the Liberal Democrat/Conservative coalition agreement, speculation is rife that CGT rates will be drastically increased in line with income tax bands. This is intended to combat speculative property investment but failed to recognise the long term and professional nature of letting residential property. The NLA recognises the detrimental effect that this policy would have and is working with the Treasury to represent landlords’ interests and ensure the nature of residential property investment is recognised and only taxed fairly.

Landlords Have Their Say.....

NLA Focus (14 May 2010) asked landlords to rank in order of importance issues which the new Government should concentrate on. Below is a snap shot of results from this survey.

81.4% - Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

Landlords polled indicated that the restoration of direct payment to landlords of LHA should be the new Government's top PRS priority.

72.6% - Possession.

Always high on the agenda, landlords would like to see possession proceedings streamlined with more resources made available for specialist housing courts or tribunals.

60% - Landlord Registration.

The majority of landlords believe that plans to develop a 'National Landlord Register' should be scrapped as a matter of urgency.

52.5% - Planning for Shared Housing.

More than half of landlords polled want to see the Government immediately rescind legislation requiring landlord of even small shared houses to apply for planning permission.

42.7% - Written Tenancy Agreements.

Only 42 percent of landlords feel that the introduction of mandatory written tenancies should be high on the agenda.

Full details of the poll will be included in the June edition of Campaign Update. However, as the top line results above illustrate reform of LHA is rated as highest priority by those landlords who responded to the poll. This is closely followed by a desire to speed up possession hearings.

The NLA seeks to represent these views to Government and will continue to promote the legitimate interests of responsible landlords.

For further information, please go to www.landlords.org.uk/campaigning or contact the NLA Campaigns Team at policy@landlords.org.uk

The National Landlords Association (NLA) exists to protect and promote the interests of private residential landlords. With over 20,000 individual landlords from around the United Kingdom and over 90 local authority associates, it provides a comprehensive range of benefits and services to its members and strives to raise standards in rented accommodation. The NLA seeks to safeguard landlords' legitimate interests by making their collective voice heard by local and central government and the media. The NLA seeks a fair legislative and regulatory environment for the private-rented sector while aiming to ensure that landlords are aware of their statutory rights and responsibilities towards their tenants.

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