



Supporting Healthy Homes for better lives

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill: a briefing for MPs

A decent, secure home defines the entire arc of our lives. It is the foundation of our health and well-being and crucial for our life chances. High quality homes increase productivity, reduce health inequalities and improve educational opportunity. Lord Nigel Crisp introduced [new provisions to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill \(LURB\)](#) to put health and wellbeing at the heart of how we create homes and communities. The amendments were co-signed by leading members of the three main parties Lord George Young of Cookham, Lord David Blunkett and Lord Andrew Stunell. Members of the House of Commons now have the chance to support these measures which will mark the beginning of a new journey for housing standards. The measures will have direct benefits for people's well-being and will significantly reduce long term costs to the NHS and social care budgets.

The Healthy Homes provisions at **Clause 97** and **Schedule 7** of the bill are high level requirements placed on the Secretary of State to ensure that all forms of regulation in the built environment, such as planning and building regulations, prioritise the health and well-being. This moves us beyond the current approach, which is complex and focused only on risk reduction, to one that is positively targeted at health promotion.

Clause 97 places a duty on the Secretary of State to report to parliament on progress towards the Healthy Homes principles. Schedule 7 sets out the Healthy Homes principles which will help guide the Secretary of State in discharging that duty. These principles include access to basic amenities like transport, nature and play areas, but also cover important issues including climate resilience to floods, droughts, heat stress and excess cold; accessibility, adaptability and inclusion; air quality; light and noise pollution. Taken together these high-level principles are intended to better coordinate and simplify the way new homes are regulated. The measures will not apply retrospectively to existing homes.

There are three important practical reasons why these measures are central to the resilience and well-being of all our communities:

1. Health is made in the home. There is now overwhelming evidence about the impact that people's homes and neighbourhoods have on their physical and mental well-being. We know that good quality, well-planned homes with access to green spaces, amenities and public transport directly benefit people's mental and physical wellbeing¹.

2. The cost to the taxpayer of inaction. Creating poor quality homes is a false economy. They lead to much higher costs not only in terms of remediation of buildings but also to health care budgets. The latest BRE report indicated that not investing in healthy homes now will result in health costs of over £135 billion in the next thirty years². The **evidence is clear** that existing regulatory and policy frameworks are failing to protect people from harm but, importantly, are also failing to support people's health. For example, over half of UK homes (55% or 15.7 million homes) fail to meet the bedroom overheating criterion³, and 791 excess deaths are associated with overheating each year in England and Wales⁴.

¹ [Strengthening the links between planning and health in England \(McKinnon et al, 2020\)](#); [Healthy buildings for a healthy city: Is the public health evidence base informing current building policies? \(Carmichael et al, 2020\)](#); [The relationship between buildings and health: a systematic review \(Ige, et al, 2018\)](#); [Built and natural environment planning principles for promoting health: an umbrella review \(Bird et al, 2018\)](#)

² [Poor housing will cost over £135.5bn over the next 30 years without urgent action \(BRE Group, 2023\)](#)

³ [Addressing overheating risk in existing UK homes \(Arup, 2022\)](#)

⁴ [Small-area assessment of temperature-related mortality risks in England and Wales \(Gassparrini et al, 2022\)](#)



3. The current policy approach needs to change. There are two problems with the current policy approach in planning and building regulations:

- **Regulation lacks clarity and coordination.** The public and private sectors need a clear framework that puts health at the heart of the housing development⁵. As Lord Young of Cookham, Conservative peer, stated during the debate on the Bill in the House of Lords, 'The [Healthy Homes] amendment brings all those provisions together under one overarching umbrella and provides what is currently missing: namely, a clear statement of government policy on healthy homes all in one place, breaking down the silos between all the government departments involved.'
- We are **creating too many new homes that reduce people's life chances.** The real test of the value of the current policy framework are the practical outcomes it produces. These outcomes are not delivering decent homes but instead are harming people's health and well-being⁶. The tragic events of the Grenfell Tower disaster offer the most extreme example of a failed regulatory approach, but new homes are still being delivered through planning that are creating longer term negative impacts on people. This includes the radical expansion of permitted development rights (PDR) which allows for the conversion of a wide range of buildings into residential use, regardless of the suitability of their location or design and without the basic safeguards of local and national planning policy. PDR conversions have been shown to produce homes of extremely poor quality, creating substandard living conditions that damage the health and life chances of residents⁷. PDR conversions also lead to the loss of employment space, putting pressure on businesses to secure suitable premises which in turn impacts local economies and employment opportunities.

There is wide cross-party and cross-sector endorsement for the principle of healthy homes.

The APPG for Healthy Homes and Healthy Britain has endorsed the inclusion of the Healthy Homes provisions in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. A joint report of the APPG for Housing Market and Delivery and APPG for Ending Homelessness also called for the inclusion of the Healthy Homes Principles in the Bill⁸.

Organisations from across housing, planning, public health, environment, transport, insurance and investment industries, and across public, private and third sectors have endorsed the Healthy Homes clause and schedule, and are listed at the end of this briefing.

The Government has moved to withdraw Lords amendments 46, 249 and 327 to remove the Healthy Homes provisions from the bill.

Please vote against these motions and help secure Healthy Homes for all!

⁵ ['Harnessing the power of the law': a qualitative analysis of the legal determinants of health in English urban planning and recommendations for fairer and healthier decision-making](#) (Montel, 2023)

⁶ [Trying times: How people living in poor quality housing have fared during the cost of living crisis](#) (The Resolution Foundation, 2023); [The cost of poor housing to the NHS](#) (BRE Group, 2021)

⁷ [Research into the quality standard of homes delivered through change of use permitted development rights](#) (MHCLG, 2020); [Impact of extending development rights to office-to-residential change](#) (RICS, 2018); [Emerging problematics of deregulating the urban: The case of permitted development in England](#) (Ferm et al, 2021) ; [Expanding Permitted Development Rights](#) (TCPA, 2023) ; [Our Fragile High Streets – Death by Permitted Development Rights?](#) (TCPA, 2021); [Government plan for uncontrolled conversions to residential will not save our high streets](#) (British Property Federation: 2021)

⁸ [The APPG for Ending Homelessness' joint inquiry with the APPG on Housing Market and Housing Delivery into Housing Solutions for Homeless Households](#) (2023)



We are seeking your support to vote against the Government move to withdraw Lords amendments: 46, 249, 327 and retain the Healthy Homes clause 97 and schedule 7 in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (as amended at report stage), to make sure all future homes support people’s health, well-being and life chances.

We, the undersigned organisations, invite the Government and MPs to retain the Healthy Homes Lords amendments 46, 249 and 327:

