The Baroness Sherlock OBE
Minister of State
Department for Work and Pensions
House of Lords
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10 August 2026

Dear Baroness Sherlock,

Local Housing Allowance and Crisis and Resilience Fund

I am writing in response to your reply on 29 July 2026 to Lord Young of Cookham's question about Local Housing Allowance in the private rented sector[i], specifically the reference you made to: "Renters receiving housing support who face a shortfall in meeting their rent costs can apply for a Crisis and Resilience Fund Housing Payment from local authorities in England".

For background information Propertymark is the UK's largest professional membership body for property agents and a member of the Cutting the Cost Coalition, a group formed to collaborate on reforms to Local Housing Allowance. I have attached our position paper *Improving access to the PRS for welfare-dependent tenants*[ii] for your information.

We welcome the Crisis and Resilience Fund, which amongst other things, helps those facing a financial crisis faced with shortfalls in rent. We would like to know when statistics will be published on how many people apply to the Crisis and Resilience Fund to ask for help to make up shortfalls in rent, particularly those who apply more than once to make rent payments, how many are successful and how much is given out in relation to rent payments. We would also like to know how many applications are turned down.

However, it is our understanding that the Crisis and Resilience Fund is aimed at providing short-term help with housing costs to provide those in crisis e.g. who may have lost their job or received an unexpected bill, some breathing space while they work on improving your housing or personal situation. It is not meant to provide long-term support.

We fully understand that Local Housing Allowance rates are not intended to meet all rents in all areas but during a period of rising rents we have repeatedly warned that the frozen Local Housing Allowance rates undermines affordability in the private rented sector and reduces access to housing for those who need support most. This increases the risk of homelessness, places additional strain on local authorities and temporary accommodation budgets.

The supply of affordable and social housing is not meeting the demand in most areas of the UK which means that the private rented sector is increasingly becoming the only housing option for choice for vulnerable people who receive benefits or are on a low income.

We support the Renters' Rights Act reforms which makes it illegal for private landlords and letting agents to legally discriminate against people who receive state benefits, however, to have a sustainable sector, agents must continue to do credit and affordability checks to ensure tenants can afford rent and meet upfront costs such as deposits.

A dwindling share of properties in the private market would be fully covered by housing benefit. The Institute of Fiscal Studies says that at present, only around 10% of properties not lived in by recipients of housing benefit fall under the cap[iii].

We think that the current approach is unsustainable and continue to call for meaningful reform to ensure welfare support reflects real-world rental costs.

This includes raising the level of Local Housing Allowance to support those on low incomes make their rental payments on a long-term basis.

We would be delighted to discuss this further with you in person.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Timothy Douglas
Head of Policy and Campaigns
Propertymark

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[i] UK Parliament; Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament; 29 July 2026; Question for Department for Work and Pensions UIN HL2363, tabled on 20 July 2026

[ii] Propertymark; Improving access to the PRS for welfare-dependent tenants | Propertymark; 16 Sepetmber 2024

[iii] IFS comment by Jed Michael and Tom Wernham, Freezes in housing support once again widen geographic disparities for low-income renters | Institute for Fiscal Studies, 21 November 2025