

## AN OPEN LETTER

**TO:** **Rachel Reeves MP** - Chancellor of the Exchequer, HM Treasury

**Darren Jones MP** – Chief Secretary, HM Treasury

**Angela Rayner MP** - Deputy Prime Minister & Secretary of State, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government

**Matthew Pennycook MP** - Minister of State, Housing, Planning and Building Safety

**Rushanara Ali MP** – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Jeremy Hunt MP** - Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer

**Kemi Badenoch MP** – Shadow Housing Minister, Housing, Planning and Building Safety

**CC** **Sarah Hodgetts**, Interim Director, Geospatial Commission

The undersigned organisations are publishing this open letter to call on the Government to take concrete steps to put the UPRN (Unique Property Reference Number) at the heart of the property market in this Parliament. Doing so will have **minimal cost**, but **significant impact** on transparency, efficiency and speed of the market.

With regards to the UPRN, we are calling on the Government to:

- **Embed for Public sector use** – Ensure that the UPRN is included in all public sector projects and legislation where it relates to buildings. This should go beyond aspirational statements and should include a proactive campaign for the public sector to be aware of the data already available to them under the Public Sector Geospatial Agreement and a clear roadmap for sector wide adoption.
- **Enable Market Adoption** - Engage with the private sector to identify and overcome barriers to adoption. These include market awareness of the UPRN and the cost of adoption – mass adoption of the UPRN, including a limited amount of associated attributes to enable this, should be available to the market at no cost for the data.
- **Ensure an ethical approach to data** – define a clear agreement about the ethical use of data in the housing market.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021, a collection of organisations representing the majority of the UK residential property sector sent an open letter to the Housing Minister highlighting the benefits of using the UPRN and calling on the Government to take steps to ensure its adoption across the sector.

Strong progress has been made by both the public and the private sector. However against the backdrop of the intention to abolish Section 21's and the introduction of the Leasehold & Freehold Reform Bill, the Building Safety Act, the short-term letting register and planned changes to both the home buying and selling process and the planning system – all of which have data at the heart of them – we believe that further action is needed for the benefit of the public sector, the private sector and the consumer.

We believe that the mass adoption of the UPRN will:

- Increase income for the Treasury from increased transactions and market activity.
- Improve building, consumer and market safety.
- Increase protection for tenants and a reduction of rogue landlords.
- Create more targeted and cost-effective enforcement of legislation.
- Speed up and make more certain the home buying and selling process.

- Reduce waste, save time and empower the consumer (e.g. by creating a [central register of Gas Safe certificates](#) built around UPRNs).
- Link in Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs) in the PRS and low-carbon installations such as Solar-PV, BESS, for visibility to potential purchasers, and Distribution Network Operators (DNO).
- Enable data collection around [accessibility and inclusion](#), and create effective routes to find accessible properties.

We believe that the wide market adoption of the UPRN will be a significant step forward with numerous benefits to the UK economy, residential market and society.

Progress has been made in recent years around the use of the UPRN, itself being made open and with it being built into several public data sets, but more robust action is required, and we call on the new government to put the UPRN in the centre stage of its property policy.

*This letter is drafted by the Real Estate Data Foundation (RED Foundation) & The Letting Industry Council (TLIC) – the authors would be delighted to meet to discuss this topic further. The letter is signed by:*

**Representative bodies:**



**This letter is also supported by a range of leading companies in the sector:**



### **Full list of signatories:**

- Accessible PRS
- Advice for Renters
- Alpha Property Insight
- Anthony Lettings
- Barbon Insurance Group
- Belvoir
- British Property Federation
- CBRE
- Centre for Public Data
- Chartered Institute of Housing
- CJ Hole
- Conveyancing Association
- Conveyancing Information Executive
- Cooper Adams
- Country Properties
- Drainage and Water Searches Network (DWSN)
- EA Compliance
- Eden
- Electrical Safety First
- Electrical Safety Roundtable
- Ellis & Co
- Elmhurst Energy
- EweMove
- Fidler & Pepper Lawyers
- Fine Country
- Goodlord
- Guild of Letting & Management
- Hamptons
- Haslams Estate Agents
- Henley Business School - University of Reading
- HomeLets Bath
- HomeOwners Alliance
- Hunters
- ihowz
- JLL
- Kamma
- Kaptur
- Kinley Folkard & Hayward
- Knight Frank
- Kotini
- Land Data
- Landmark
- LandTech
- Legal for Lettings
- Marks out of Tenancy
- Martin & Co
- Mr and Mrs Clarke
- Mullucks
- NAPIT
- Newton Fallowell
- Nicholas Humphreys
- No Letting Go
- Northwood
- NRLA
- Onthemarket Software
- Open Property Data Association
- OpenBrix
- Parkers
- PLACEMAKE.IO
- Property Logbook
- Property Redress Scheme
- Propertychecklists.co.uk
- Propertymark
- RED Foundation
- Residential Property Surveyors Association
- RICS
- Rightmove
- RLBA
- SafeMove
- Savills
- Simon & Simon Property Services
- SIOR, Society of Industrial and Office Realtors
- SME Professional
- Society of Licensed Conveyancer (SLC)
- SQRx Ltd
- Squires Estates
- Sunshine Rentals Ltd
- Tenancy Deposit Scheme
- The Guild Property Professionals
- The Lettings Hub
- The Lettings Industry Council
- The Property Booth
- The Property Institute
- The Property Ombudsman
- TrustMark
- UK PropTech Association
- UK Association of Letting Agents
- University College of Estate Management
- Whitegates
- Yuno