

Matthew Pennycook MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

10 July 2024

BY EMAIL AND POST

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Dear Mr Pennycook

ALEP: Working together to uphold standards in the leasehold enfranchisement sector

On behalf of the Association of Leasehold Enfranchisement Practitioners (ALEP) we would like to congratulate you on your new role as Minister of State in the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and we look forward to working with you as the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 reaches its commencement phase.

This is an important time for land tenure in England and we know that the new government intends to bring about further change.

Leasehold enfranchisement is a complex subject – particularly for those with little or no knowledge or experience in dealing with enfranchisement or their rights under any new or existing legislation. ALEP is a not-for-profit sector association for professionals established in 2007 and prides itself on ensuring its members are highly experienced and work to an agreed level of conduct when serving their leaseholder and freeholder clients.

We are an apolitical organisation and our barrister, solicitor, valuation and project management members, all of whom are all leading experts in this field, have also worked directly with the Law Commission, the APPG and the previous government on the reform programme.

As Directors of ALEP - and lawyers in private practice - we have been providing technical support to the team at the Department, having held several meetings with your colleagues in recent years in order to advise on some of the legal and valuation aspects of the (then) proposed legislative changes.

We have consistently sought to engage with government over the years, but yet, our collective voice seems not to be heard in the same way as those campaigning for the full abolition of the system. ALEP is not anti-reform as is often stated, but changes to legislation must work in practice for all concerned. One of the aims of our association has always been to make it easier for leaseholders to understand the process and exercise their rights. A number of the reforms - such as the abolition of the two-year rule – have long been on the ALEP ‘wish list.’

We commend you for your thorough and meticulous amendments to the Bill (as was) and we noted your commitment and engagement with this topic with interest. It is vital for all those impacted by the leasehold system that the commencement of the Act, as well as the necessary secondary legislation, is workable and fit for purpose for those working in this sector and for the clients they are tasked to advise.

Today, more than 260 member firms including individual barristers are part of our Association. Our membership represents over 1200 professionals, and all firms are significantly active in this sector. However, at the current time there is uncertainty for **all** involved, which brings with it its own complications.

We are therefore hopeful that you will be keen to enter a dialogue with us and would like to raise the following matters, which require urgent clarification:

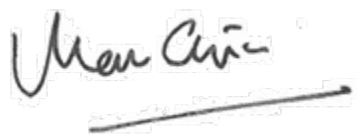
- What are the timelines for full commencement of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 – including potential timing for tabling secondary legislation to give effect to potential changes to valuation methodology etc.?
- When will the full guidelines to the Act be published?
- When will the results of the previous government's consultation on ground rents be published (if at all)?
- Regarding this point, (assuming they are to be published), how does the new government intend to adopt or respond to the consultation's outcomes and what is the likely timeline for this?

ALEP hosts both an annual lecture and a conference, as well as regional training and informal networking events throughout the year. Our Conference will take place on Tuesday 15 October at the Royal College of Physicians. The agenda will be considering and debating the practicalities of the Act, and we would be delighted to welcome you to this as a participant or delegate. It would provide an excellent opportunity to open dialogue with our members.

ALEP is committed to upholding standards in the leasehold enfranchisement sector, and we would like to request an initial meeting to discuss the important work ALEP and its members perform. We would also be pleased to offer any counsel on any leasehold or enfranchisement issues. Please contact clare@alep.org.uk in the first instance to arrange.

If you have any questions, would like any more information about ALEP in the meantime, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Chick
ALEP Director



John Midgley
ALEP Director

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