

Social Mobility plans welcomed by the Northern Housing Consortium

The Northern Housing Consortium has welcomed the recent announcements on government efforts to improve social mobility. The news that Alan Milburn will become social mobility tsar further highlights the government's promotion of social mobility to the top of their social agenda.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg commented, "This Government is committed to the long term - to making decisions today that will promote a better future: a more prosperous economy, and a fairer society. Our determination to fix the deficit is matched by our determination to create a more socially mobile society."

"This is a complex and contested area of both research and policy. And action to improve social mobility will take many years to take effect. In policy terms, it is like turning the wheel on an oil tanker".

"Promoting social mobility is a long-term business. And it is precisely for that reason that it is vital to establish now, at the beginning of our time in office, that promoting social mobility is at the top of our social agenda."

Rachel Collings, JobMoves Manager at the Northern Housing Consortium explained, "Mr Clegg's support for social mobility is very important for the sustainability of the future of social mobility schemes in England. His comments acknowledge that implementing successful social mobility is difficult to achieve over a short period of time, however social landlords can take action now to contribute towards the success of social mobility in the future by giving consideration in their lettings policy to include a level of priority to those needing to move for work related reasons."

"The Northern Housing Consortium is currently delivering JobMoves, a 12 month social mobility pilot funded by Communities and Local Government until March 2011. JobMoves offers advice and support in seeking and securing a new home within the social rented sector to help tenants through the often difficult and complex processes of identifying potential social landlords in a new area, engaging in choice based lettings schemes and exploring mutual exchange options. It is designed to remove the obstacles that social tenants often face in moving to take up work, get back into work after a period of unemployment or move closer to work where the commute is unsustainable. The pilot will contribute to the social mobility debate and help to demonstrate the landscape in the North in terms of social tenants needing to move for work related reasons. We look forward to delivering some very positive outcomes".

For further information, please contact Rachel Collings on 0191 5651207, email info@jobmoves.org.uk, or visit www.jobmoves.org.uk.

Ends

Notes to editors

1. JobMoves is a Communities and Local Government funded pilot until March 2011. JobMoves is in place to facilitate social mobility for tenants needing to move for their job. The aim is to assist with moves between social rented homes to maintain the tenant's security of tenure and affordable rent. JobMoves is a personalised advice and advocacy service for social housing tenants in the North, who are in work but are finding it difficult to commute, those who have a firm job offer or those with an apprenticeship placement an unreasonable distance from home. JobMoves advisors will spend dedicated time with tenants, talking about housing needs, guiding them through the range of housing options available and negotiating with social landlords to help facilitate a housing move closer to the tenants place of work. The JobMoves advice and advocacy service covers the North of England:

- North East
- Yorkshire & Humber
- North West

Further information can be found at www.jobmoves.org.uk

2. The Northern Housing Consortium is a non-political, not for profit, member based organisation, whose members between them manage almost 90% of social housing in the North. Our main roles are:
 - To provide a comprehensive range of timely, relevant and affordable services for members with a distinct focus on Northern issues
 - To take a lead role in enabling the improvement of housing and organisational performance in the North
 - To work with Government and other bodies to ensure the region benefits from the resources and funding available to provide safe, vibrant, sustainable communities

Further information can be found at www.northern-consortium.org.uk

3. Communities and Local Government sets policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration, planning and fire and rescue. CLG have responsibility for all race equality and community cohesion related issues in England and for building regulations, fire safety and some housing issues in England and Wales. The rest of CLG's work applies only to England.