

# Spring budget 2021

## Building back better, stronger and safer

Everyone deserves a safe, secure, comfortable place to call home. Not just now, in the middle of a crisis, but always.

The Spring Budget provides an opportunity to do that – for the government to create jobs, boost the economy and improve people’s lives by building back better, stronger and safer.

## Building back better

**We can build back better with funding for a new generation of greener, affordable homes in every region of England.**

If we are to meet the government’s ambition to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, then decarbonising homes – including social homes – is a priority.

### We are asking the government to:

- Prioritise sustainable, long-term funding solutions to help make our homes greener, warmer and more energy efficient.
- Deliver on its manifesto commitment to set up a 10-year £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. As the major provider of social housing in England, housing associations must be able to bid directly into the Fund.
- Work with the sector to deliver a ‘roadmap’ to 2050 – to provide clarity on the standards, regulations, technology and requirements that housing associations will need to work towards to become net zero by the middle of the century.
- Make the £4bn Levelling Up Fund available for economic, social and physical investment, including housing renewal.
- Empower local areas to deliver joined-up regeneration suited to their own circumstances, while contributing to national objectives.

## Building back stronger

**We can build back stronger and fairer by supporting people most in need.**

The coronavirus crisis has both highlighted and worsened inequalities across the country, with many areas greatly affected by economic downturn. Since the start of the pandemic, we have seen an extra two million people across the country applying for Universal Credit.

### **We are asking the government to:**

- Keep the £20 uplift to Universal Credit to avoid pulling an estimated 700,000 more people into poverty (including 300,000 children).
- Ensure that employment support meets needs across communities and enables social housing to deliver in partnership for recovery.
- Bring together national departments and local housing partners to design and mobilise a response to the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs.
- Ringfence housing-related support, allocating £1.6bn per year to local authorities in England.
- Open the next round of the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme funding quickly and rollover unspent funding (after March), to avoid lost projects.
- Invest in homelessness prevention, such as employment and skills programmes, to give people the financial resilience they need to avoid homelessness.

## **Building back safer**

### **We can build back safer by addressing the building safety crisis.**

In [our submission to the Budget](#), we have called on the government to provide upfront funding for all remedial works. We estimate that vital work to ensure resident safety in housing association-owned high-rise buildings alone will exceed £10bn.

Secretary of State Robert Jenrick MP recently announced an additional £3.5bn of funding for the remediation of unsafe cladding, to ensure that leaseholders do not have to pay for safety works to external wall systems on buildings 18m and over. This additional funding is welcome, but we know it does not go far enough in addressing the building safety crisis.

We do not believe that charitable housing associations should have to pay to remediate their properties, which were purchased from developers who are responsible for the original build.

### **We are asking the government to:**

- Provide upfront funding to pay for all safety remedial works to all buildings that need them. This will help speed up remedial works and the government could recoup costs from those responsible once works have been completed.
- Work with the sector to deliver an effective and urgent remediation plan that will prioritise the allocation of resources in the first instance to buildings that need them most. While government commitment of public resources for remedial works is welcome, these must be directed on the basis of risk.