

HOUSING IN CRISIS

PCS young members fight back



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Social Cleansing

Young workers are being pushed out of many areas, particularly in London, because they cannot afford to rent or buy homes as prices rise. The average rent in London is now over £2,200 a month. Homeless charity Shelter found that 80% of homes nationally are unaffordable to the average income family.

The Tories have promised 200,000 starter homes. This is still not enough, and will still be unaffordable to many young workers. A young worker lucky enough to earn the promised minimum wage of £9 per hour would only be able to afford a home like this in three areas: Barrow in Furness, Southport and Hull.

The Housing and Planning Bill, if enacted, will see 1.3 million more council houses sold off to tenants who will wind up selling them to big landlords. Rent prices are pushed up still further by this.

Meanwhile the public sector pay freeze and planned cuts to working tax credits will make survival even harder for DWP staff, especially young workers; how can you save for a house when you're struggling to make wages last to the end of the month?

Young workers are among the worst hit

Over the past year one in five working adults aged 20 to 34 has moved back in with their parents.

The proportion of 25 to 34 year olds who own their homes has plummeted from 59% to 36% in less than a decade. The under 35s now make up over half of all tenants in the private rented sector, and spend up an average 41% of their income on rent.

Of those who can afford to strike out on their own, they are paying high rents for substandard housing. Three in ten privately rented homes are considered 'non-decent' and one in six are actually physically unsafe. The government's own figures show that 16% of private rented properties fail to

Until the Thatcher government abolished rent control in 1988 you could take your landlord to a Rent Tribunal and have your rent reduced. Tenancies created before 1988 still have this right... it would be easy for a new government to extend this

Nancy, housing campaigner

meet basic legal standards and present "a severe threat to health or safety".

Insecure tenancies make it hard to complain to or about landlords, and there's a lack of alternatives for tenants. Council cuts continually reduce resources available to help.

TAKE ACTION

Lobby your MP to demand: rent controls, tenants' rights, the building of council homes, a register of landlords and tougher laws to ensure that all homes meet the Decent Homes standard. Contact leeds@pcs.org.uk to get involved, and get a lobby pack.

Propose a motion at your PCS branch and local Trades Union Council calling for a campaign on housing. Union activists can organise protests and petitions to demand that local councils refuse to implement the bedroom tax, the benefit cap and that they build more council houses.

Organise a members car park meeting on housing using info in the lobby pack and take a picture, posing with the PCS Housing Campaign poster during Young Workers month and tweet it to [@pcs_union](https://twitter.com/pcs_union)