

# Housing Minister backs help-to-rent schemes

Submitted by: Laughology

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The Government Housing Minister has backed a call for help-to-rent schemes to enable people to escape homelessness.

Gavin Barwell MP met with directors from Croydon housing specialists Caridon Property (<http://www.caridonproperty.co.uk>) to discuss the benefits of schemes which help people at risk of homelessness move into private rented accommodation. Caridon Property is lobbying for more initiatives for people struggling to rent, similar to help-to-buy schemes for first time buyers. Such schemes enable vulnerable people to find homes and escape the trap of homelessness.

Caridon Property, which provides private rented accommodation for many tenants who may otherwise be homeless, specialises in providing well-appointed homes for social housing tenants. It is a key advocate of help-to-rent initiatives.

The company, which has won awards for its social housing provision and community support, held talks with Mr Barwell and homeless charity Crisis last week at one of its properties. The Croydon MP heard how help-to-rent projects change the lives of those facing homelessness and give vulnerable people the security of a home.

Mr Barwell heard how help-to-rent schemes can solve homelessness because private rented accommodation is often the only way homeless people can get back into a home. Social housing is in short supply and local authorities only have a statutory duty to house people who match specific criteria, such as pregnant women and women with children. Not all homeless people are a priority and the money needed for a deposit and rent in advance is often a barrier. Landlords are also often reluctant to rent to homeless people. Help-to-rent schemes provide funding and ongoing tenancy support.

Caridon Group is a leading UK property developer and private rental landlord. It runs a service which advises and supports tenants and landlords and builds homes. It delivers housing for many people who would otherwise face homelessness and provides a vital third option for people unable to afford their own homes but who do not qualify for a local authority or housing association home.

Caridon Chief Executive Mario Carrozzo said: "Many landlords would never consider renting to someone with a history of homelessness as they can be considered too high risk, but help-to-rent projects address their concerns and make this a sensible business option. We are geared to offer a high number of properties for social housing and the key to our success is the key relationships we have built up with charities like Crisis and more support from Local and Central Government. We feel that more needs to be done by the government to support this drive and the Homelessness Bill is certainly a step in the right direction. Hopefully we can build upon this in the future"

Crisis is also urging the Government to do more to help unlock private renting for homeless people through its campaign: Home, No Less Will Do.

At the meeting, Mr Barwell met with a tenant who used one of Crisis' help-to-rent projects after the birth of her three-month-old twins made her housing situation impossible. She said without the scheme,

she would have struggled to find somewhere to live and could have ended up homeless.

Mr Barwell said: "I was very pleased to have the opportunity to meet one of my constituents, Selina, and hear about the excellent work Crisis and Caridon have been doing in helping those facing the prospect of being made homeless. It remains a priority of this Government to reduce the homelessness numbers and work with all tenure providers to ensure everyone has a place they can call their home."

For more information contact:

Akeel Alidina

[akeel@caridon.co.uk](mailto:akeel@caridon.co.uk)

0203 307 0555 / 07947 421 309

Notes to editors:

Caridon Property is a Croydon-based property group specialising in lettings, management and property development. It owns, builds and manages residential property across London and the South East and houses a range of vulnerable tenants, including those referred from Local Government.

Caridon won four major awards in 2016, including the Commitment to the Community Award at the Croydon Business Excellence Awards 2016 and the Making a Difference Award 2016, given by the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme. Both were awarded in recognition of the company's work helping homeless people into rented accommodation.