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## **Issues facing Private Renters**

The Covid-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented demands on household finances. Research shows that one in four private renters have seen their earnings fall since the start of the pandemic and are concerned about being made homeless.

The Government took welcome steps at the beginning of the pandemic last year, including the moratorium on evictions. But alongside housing charities, I am concerned that the rolling back of those protections will lead to a rise in homelessness.

The lifting of the eviction ban on 31 May will have understandably caused upset and worry for many tenants. Meanwhile, the Local Housing Allowance freeze and the planned cut to Universal Credit risks pushing many households into poverty, debt, and homelessness.

The Government promised that no one would lose their home because of the pandemic and Ministers must come forward with a comprehensive action plan to achieve that. I also support calls to strengthen support available to tenants, ending the five-week wait, suspending the benefit cap and I campaigned against the move to remove the £20 Universal Credit uplift.

The pandemic has exposed the deep inequalities in our housing system, with those in insecure, overcrowded homes more at risk of the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, including many who were previously able to keep up with their housing costs but through no fault of their own are now in financial difficulty.

The immediate priority is to make sure that people get the support they need to prevent them losing their homes. However, longer term reform is necessary. We need stronger regulation in the private rented sector as well as more affordable and social housing. Universal Credit should also be replaced with a new social security system that provides a proper safety net that has dignity and respect at its heart.

The Government has repeatedly promised to bring forward a White Paper on reforms to the private rented sector. Ministers should avoid further delays, abolish section 21 'no fault' evictions and give people security of tenure.

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