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Ludlow Thompson
Berkeley Business Park
Wainwright Road
Worcester
Worcestershire
WR4 9FA

16/08/2018

Re: Discrimination against renters who claim housing benefit

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

I am writing in regard to Ludlow Thompson's policy of not offering to rent properties to people who claim housing benefit.

We have recently conducted a wide-ranging investigation into letting agent practices towards people who claim housing benefit. As part of this investigation we contacted a range of letting agent branches including ten Ludlow Thompson branches. Of those ten, nine stated it was Ludlow Thompson's policy not to let to tenants on housing benefit.

We believe this policy is wrong. It unfairly discriminates against the growing number of households who rely on housing benefit to be able to afford a place to live. This policy also disproportionately disadvantages women and people with disabilities because these groups are more likely to be claiming housing benefit.

We would be happy to meet with you to provide you with more information and to make the case for changing your approach.

In the meantime, we will be raising awareness of this practice with the hope that greater public focus on policies of this nature will bring an end to discrimination against people on benefits.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Greg Beales



Director of Communications, Policy & Campaigns

Shelter

Until there's a home for everyone
shelter.org.uk



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London
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[REDACTED]
Head of Property Services
Ludlow Thompson
Berkeley Business Park
Wainwright Road
Worcester
Worcestershire
WR4 9FA

Also by email to: [REDACTED]

17/08/2018

Re: Discrimination against renters who claim housing benefit

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 17th August 2018.

I am quite surprised by your assertion that Ludlow Thompson does not discriminate against renters who claim housing benefit. As part of an extensive mystery shopping exercise we made 21 calls in total to Ludlow Thompson, calling each of your ten branches at least twice – once as a landlord and once as a tenant.

- In 20 of those 21 calls your employees indicated that you do not rent to people on housing benefit
- In all of the 10 calls made by landlords your employees indicated that it was not company policy to let properties to benefit recipients
- In response to the calls made by tenants, 9 of your 10 branches told us that it was not policy to let properties to benefit recipients

Clearly there has been a very serious breakdown in communication within your organisation if company policies as set out by you are widely flouted across all of your branches. Do you have any explanation for this huge discrepancy?

Given the seriousness of this, may I therefore welcome your commitment to re-iterate your position to all of your staff and may I also take this opportunity to ask if in addition you will agree to:

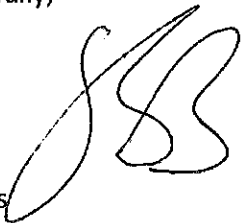
- (a) State clearly on your website that you welcome applications from those in receipt of benefits to all of your properties
- (b) Commit to training all of your staff that no tenant should be barred from any property you let simply because they are in receipt of housing benefit or any other benefits

(c) Confirm that you will stop advising landlords not to let their properties to tenants who are in receipt of benefits

Clearly there is a fairly major task here to stamp out these kinds of discriminatory practices across all of your branches.

In the interests of transparency and accountability I am making the contents of my letters to Mr Thompson, and this to letter to you, public by means of including them on the Shelter website. If you would like me to also include your reply and any future reply I am more than happy to do so.

Yours faithfully,



Greg Beales

Director of Communications, Policy & Campaigns

Shelter