



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

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To all Local Authority leaders in England

30 October 2020

Dear all,

### **'Right to Build' day 2020**

As part of 'Right to Build' day, I am writing to you all to restate this Government's commitment to the self and custom house building sector and share with you my desire to support more self and customer builders across England to come forwards in order to realise the aspiration of building a home of their own.

Right to Build day provides an opportunity for central Government, local Government and the sector to come together to take stock of the progress that has been made to date and showcase the achievements of self and custom builders across the country. We can also take this opportunity to reflect and consider what further action may be needed to support growth of this important sector, so that it can contribute to delivering the homes we need; support diversification of the housebuilding market; and give consumers greater choice over the kind of homes they want to live in.

As you will know the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, known as 'the Right to Build' took a major step forward in supporting aspiring self and custom builders across England. This legislation requires authorities to support those who want to take up self or custom build - holding a register of local people who want to take this up and ensuring they permission enough suitable land for individuals and families to use as plots, within three years of joining the register.

This year marks five years since this Act was passed meaning local authorities should have now brought forward plots for everyone who joined their local Self and Custom build register in the first two base periods.

As part of 'Right to Build' Day 2020, I can also confirm that shortly we will be publishing the first data collected from local authorities showing local self and custom build activity – including the entries on their registers and number of suitable plots they have permissioned for self and custom build. I hope this will show that local authorities are matching the Government's ambition, permissioning suitable plots quickly to ensure that local people who want to build their own home are able to do so. Moving forwards, year on year, we will continue to publish this information to ensure we can all continue to monitor progress.

To make it as easy as possible for local authorities to support self and custom build and enact the Government's legislation, my Department will also publish updated planning guidance in November to provide further clarity on how this can best be implemented.

The Department has put in place a number of measures to support authorities to meet their statutory duties, including through the work of National Custom and Self Build Association's 'Right to Build Task Force', which Government has funded in the last two years. This Taskforce has worked to build capacity across England, with support tailored to local needs, including through workshops, as well as a clear aim of building good practice to enable the delivery of policies and strategies which support self and custom build. I would encourage you to make use of this resource if you have not already. Further details can be found through the 'Right to Build toolkit' website and workshops can be arranged through contacting the following email: [taskforce@righttobuild.org.uk](mailto:taskforce@righttobuild.org.uk).

The Local Government Association (LGA) is also hosting a webinar from the Right to Build Task Force on 18 November. This introductory session will help councils understand their duties and inform thinking to bring forward custom and self-build. This is available to book through the LGA's website.

Looking at what more we can do to support self and custom build, in August, we published our Planning for the Future White Paper, setting out ambitious reforms to streamline and modernise the planning process and bring a new focus to design and sustainability. A key part of this is Government's vision for growing the self and custom build sector and our reforms will make it simpler and easier for local people and communities to build or design their own homes.

Our White Paper included proposals such as the requirement for local authorities to create self and custom build sub-zones within growth zones, with sufficient provision made available to meet requirements identified in their self-build register. The White Paper also explores how publicly-owned land disposal can support small and medium sized housebuilders and the self-build sector.

As we move forward with these wider planning reforms, we think the time is right to review how the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding legislation is working. As part of this, the Department will convene a Ministerial roundtable with the sector and local authorities to review progress to date, to consider how reform could best support the sector and whether our interventions are having the desired effect.

I welcome the work local government is taking forward to support self and custom build and particularly those examples of local authorities who are going above and beyond their statutory duties to support the sector. I am keen to see and hear about other examples of best practice from across the country.

Self and custom housebuilding remains a key component of this Government's wider housing strategy to create the quality homes and places this country needs. I trust that you will join me in supporting this growing sector.



**RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP**