

Shelter

Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP
Minister of State for the Cabinet Office
The Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London, SW1A 2AS

Wednesday 27th April 2016

Dear Minister,

I am writing in reference to the recent announcement of a new clause in grant agreements banning organisations from using taxpayer funds for lobbying (commonly known as the 'gagging clause'). We welcome today's decision to pause the implementation of the new clause pending a review of representations made on the matter.

At the time of the announcement, and on occasions since then, government representatives have used Shelter's name in defence of this new policy. The grounds for mentioning Shelter are that we have already been subject to these rules as part of a pilot within DCLG, and that this has not prevented us from using our own funds to lobby government on housing policy. This is a misrepresentation of the situation and it came as a complete surprise to us to be referenced in this way. As such I request that the government cease referring to Shelter in this context in future.

I accept that it is the case that Shelter's grant agreement with DCLG contains this clause, and that we do continue to lobby government on housing policy. However, the use of Shelter's name implies that we have given our blessing to this initiative, when in fact we were never made aware that we were participating in a pilot and have at no time been asked whether the clause has any impact on our lobbying work.

The project for which we receive DCLG funding (the National Homelessness Advice Service, or NHAS) is unusual in its structure and operations. It is a partnership with Citizens Advice that sits separately from Shelter's mainstream services. As we don't feel it is representative we are very uncomfortable with it being used to justify placing restrictions on other, potentially very different charities and projects. In other contexts the clause may well impact on a charity's (including Shelter's) ability to lobby government, and a lot will depend on how it is enforced by government departments.

Shelter, the National Campaign
for Homeless People Limited

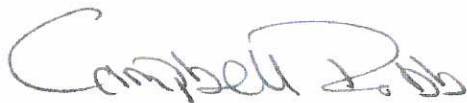
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Shelter

I will happily take a meeting to discuss this if you have any queries. In the meantime I will be making this letter available on Shelter's website as a public declaration of our position and for the avoidance of any misunderstandings.

Yours sincerely,



Campbell Robb
Chief Executive

CC:

Marcus Jones MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, DCLG)
John Manzoni (Permanent Secretary, Cabinet Office)
Melanie Dawes (Permanent Secretary, DCLG)

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