

Residents in housing association accommodation are getting a raw deal in Bath.

After canvassing in Kingsmead over the last month it has confirmed what I know from my work as a GP in Kingsmead and at Julian house- that residents are facing health hazards from locked bin rooms, inappropriate rubbish stores meaning waste is everywhere and bins reported as being full of glass for years

Following the change in waste management at the end of last year there has been a failure of the council and Curo Group to find a solution that works for the blocks of flats. This has caused, and is still causing, misery. I visited the bin rooms at Phoenix House with a fellow GP and we were both appalled at the stench, flies and rubbish strewn around. It was a genuine health hazard. The council say they will collect waste if it is presented correctly but that is the responsibility of Curo and Curo don't answer their emails.

My experience of Curo complaints procedure is not good. I have not had a reply to my email of 13th June which was resent on 7th July- and I have heard the same from residents. According to the regulator -The Homes and Communities Agency- "Handling complaints poorly is potentially a breach of the regulator's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard, which requires all providers to have an approach to complaints which aims to resolve them promptly and fairly"

While the Ombudsman deals with individual complaints, a designated person such as an MP, councillor or board member with oversight of a pattern of behaviour can escalate concerns to the Homes and Communities Agency. I ask that The Council take the concerns of the residents seriously and consider whether Curo have a case to answer.

There are other issues with housing that need addressing by The Council, such low-income families spending money they don't have heating poorly insulated single glazed properties. Bath has decided that maintaining the appearance of the windows as they would have been in 1774 is more important than the living conditions of people living in 2018.

Some people have complained that Bath is becoming less genteel, tidy and clean, but the truth is that for many, it has never been that. The fact is these problems that have faced people, who have been ignored for years, are now spilling over and affecting others. It is not enough to sweep these issues back behind the Georgian façade. Real people need real help.

As the Foxhill debacle shows, Curo have lost sight of their core duties. This Council should stop colluding with them and hold them to account!

