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Dear Javid

11 NOV 2013

Thank you for your letter of 17 October enclosing correspondence from your constituent,

addressed to the Rt Hon Clive Betts MP, chair of the House of Commons Select Committee on Communities and Local Government. Your constituent writes regarding his concerns about the way Building Regulations apply to electrical installation and repairs in dwellings and you ask for my comments on the points he has made.

Before 2005, when Part P of the Building Regulations was introduced, there was no legal requirement for electrical work in dwellings to comply with any standards. As such there were no checks in place on competence of electricians or checks on the standard of the work they carried out in dwellings. It was as a result of concern about the health and safety risks involved with badly installed electrical work, which can include death, injury and fire, that Part P was introduced.

This year, in response to feedback that this Department has received about the cost and bureaucracy associated with Part P, the requirements of Part P have been refined to try and manage the costs associated with regulating a baseline standard of electrical safety.

Your constituent suggests that a compulsory electrical register along the same lines as the Gas Safe Register should be introduced for electricians. Government does not consider such an electrical register as appropriate for electrical work in the same way it is for gas safety. This is because the level and incidence of risk involved are of a different scale and as such to have a compulsory electrical register would be a disproportionate response to the issue. The competent person schemes that many electricians choose to join has increased the number of registered electricians and ensures that checks on their work are being carried out.

Government believes that the current arrangement of capturing electrical safety through the building regulations setting a baseline legal standard for electricians to work to is the appropriate way of addressing issues of electrical safety and as such have no current plans to change that.

*Regards
Stephen*

STEPHEN WILLIAMS MP