



House of Commons
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Press Release – For immediate release

Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham
27th February 2013

Press Release

Sarah Champion MP calls for action on rogue letting agents

Sarah Champion today demanded Government action on the unscrupulous practices and rip-off fees of lettings agents.

Speaking in a Westminster Hall debate organised at her request, the Rotherham MP quoted a [report by the Citizens Advice Bureau](#) found that 73 per cent of tenants are dissatisfied with the service provided by their letting agent. In a report by Which?, "[Renting Roulette](#)", letting agents ranked second from bottom across 50 consumer markets.

A [national survey of letting agents](#) found that 94 per cent imposed additional charges on tenants on top of the tenancy deposit and rent or rent in advance. It also found huge variation in the size of these charges.

Sarah Champion told MPs that the charge for checking references ranged from £10 to £275 and the charge for renewing a tenancy ranged from £12 to £220. In some cases additional charges for a tenancy amounted to over £600.

Speaking today in a Westminster Hall debate organised at her request, Sarah Champion MP said:

"The evidence shows that too many tenants are being ripped off by rogue letting agents who fail to protect their money, and charge exorbitant fees which are completely opaque.

"Action to regulate lettings agents would benefit tenants and landlords, providing protection for their money. At present it is still possible to set up a letting or management agency with no qualifications whatsoever.

"As the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors has put it, letting agents operate in the property market's "Wild West".

“Currently, good landlords are being exploited and good letting agents undercut by rogues. This can’t continue!

“With millions of families up and down the country living through the biggest squeeze on living standards in a generation, action on fees would ease the pressure for tenants.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

Sarah Champion MP was speaking in a Westminster Hall debate on Letting Agents (2.30pm – 4pm Wednesday, February 27)

Please contact Parliamentary Assistant Simon Hogg (07939 095946) for more information