



Tied tenants to protest outside PCA Newby's office

By Daniel Woolfson

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A protest calling for the resignation of pubs code adjudicator (PCA) Paul Newby later this month has been planned by tied tenants and the Pubs Advisory Service (PAS).

Protesters led by the PAS have reiterated claims that Newby, who was appointed as PCA in May 2016, had failed to act in the interests of tenants and was therefore unfit for office.



The demonstration will take place outside the PCA's office in Birmingham later this month (15 March).

PAS founder Chris Wright said: "The fact that the pubs code has had absolutely no impact on the horror stories we are seeing, seemingly on a daily basis, demonstrates the complete contempt in which our new law is held by the pub companies, showing they have no fear of Paul Newby or the power he is supposed to carry."

Anger over referrals

There has been no decision on more than 100 market-rent-only (MRO) option referrals that have been submitted to his office, resulting in tenants being forced to give up on the process, the PAS said.

Dave Mountford, also of PAS, added: "When MRO was voted into the legislation in November 2015, we felt we had achieved everything that was needed to finally provide tied tenants with a fair deal.

“Alas the Government has, either deliberately or incompetently, put someone in charge who has been part of the problem and then expected tenants to accept he will become part of the solution.”

Newby told *The Morning Advertiser*: “I understand that some members of the PAS are planning to visit Birmingham.

“I hope that they will take up the offer I made last week to meet and talk about how we can together make the pubs code work for tenants.

“My door remains open so let’s put hostility aside and meet for a constructive discussion.”

In an [open letter to the industry](#) last week, he moved to assuage anger that no arbitrations had yet been made.

'No straightforward answer'

He wrote: “I am now asked ‘when will the first arbitrations be concluded?’ Of course, I would like to be able to give a date but, unfortunately, there isn’t a straightforward answer.

“My arbitration team and I are making great progress but I only have limited influence over how fast the process advances – the parties in any dispute have significant control on timing.”

Because the code was relatively new, many issues, being the first of their kind, would take time to resolve, he said.

Nicola Pearce, of Enterprise tenancy the Post Office, Plymouth, Devon, said: “I’m here because every day that passes with no decision being made by Mr Newby, has a detrimental effect on people’s lives.

“Every referral represents a person suffering and waiting for justice and, in so many cases, the justice they need isn’t coming fast enough for them.”

Newby has faced significant opposition to his appointment as PCA since it was announced, with many critics claiming his past work as a director of Fleurets and shares still held in the company amounted to a [conflict of interest](#)

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