

# The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper toolkit

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## About the author

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**Roger Jarman** is an Associate with the Housing Quality Network where he provides consultancy services, leads training programmes and writes on housing regulation and other matters. He is also a Non Executive Director of two housing organisations. From 1991 until 1999, he was Head of Housing Management at the Housing Corporation and then from 1999 until 2011 he was Head of Housing at the Audit Commission overseeing the 1,400 housing inspections undertaken by the Commission during that period. He was a member of the team that produced the Cave Review of social housing regulation in 2007. He is leading a range of training sessions on the White Paper proposals for HQN over the next few months.

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## Introduction from Alistair McIntosh, HQN Chief Executive

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“What’s the most important skill housing professionals need now?”

“Get better at listening” – that’s the answer the MCHLG team driving the Charter through gave us.

This is the change we must see. So how do we pull together a toolkit to help you? It’s about shifting attitudes not just ticking off actions.

We can’t just serve up yet another oh so easy to use checklist. Every organisation that’s fallen short has loads of green lights on self-assessments for governance, customer care and safety. And yet they still go wrong. In point of fact the delusion of the checklist only serves to quicken the journey down the wrong road.

Safety consultant Gill Kernick urges us to practice what she calls ‘chronic unease’ and I couldn’t agree more.

Of course, like any toolkit we set lots of questions to find out how well you know your homes and your residents. We probe you on every nook and cranny of the Charter.

Yes we ask for evidence of compliance, but you owe it to yourselves to give real assurance not fake assurance. Ask how you know something to be true. Challenge each other’s responses. When you watch the Grenfell Inquiry you see people who should have got to grips with things properly. Please don’t let this be you.

And we offer no glib answers. Listening to residents doesn’t always mean you can give folk what they want. But it’s a start at breaking down the ‘them and us’ barriers we sometimes see. In any event, residents never ask for the fabled gold taps. They know all about value for money as they live it every day.

All too often we are falling short on the basics. Take a walk around your estates whenever you can. Are you proud of them? That’s the acid test.

We make no bones about the need for investment to improve many homes and estates. Let’s hope the Government recognises this and helps. Yet some of the estates that most obviously need physical works can look well cared for. Hats off to the residents and staff that go the extra mile. Why can’t that happen everywhere?

HQN has tried hard not to hark back to the past. We know that inspection, for better or worse, will not be as it was before. Time has marched on. But I will make one point that matters.

Back in the day the inspectors only gave one star for compliance, which was a fail. Only those that went above and beyond bare standards got three stars or top marks.

It’s not enough to crawl one inch into compliance. Why not push for excellence? That was and remains the one and only point of the Housing Quality Network.



## Social housing tenures and the Charter

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In the [White Paper](#), the terms social housing ‘tenant’ and ‘resident’ are used interchangeably. In this toolkit the term ‘resident’ is used throughout. Social housing landlords have overall responsibility for the delivery of certain services to licensees, tenants, leaseholders, shared owners and potentially others living in accommodation owned by them, whether they are local authorities or housing associations. On that basis, the term ‘resident’ is used in this Toolkit to refer to all those receiving services from social housing landlords. However, the nature and scale of services that a landlord should deliver to different ‘residents’ will vary depending on the legal relationship between the landlord and the service user. Landlords should take advice about the application of the various provisions of the Charter for different service users.

### Social housing landlords

In this toolkit we use two terms to denote the key providers of social housing – namely local authorities and housing associations. Local authorities own and manage housing (often known as council housing) in the areas defined by their geographic boundaries (in the main). They are statutory bodies. A number of local authorities outsource the management of some or all of their housing to arms-length management organisations, tenant management organisations and other agencies. Housing associations are the other major providers of social housing. They are private sector bodies usually with charitable purposes. Both types of provider are defined legally as ‘registered providers’. In the Charter, housing associations are referred to as ‘private registered providers’. This legally distinguishes them from local authority housing providers.

## How to use this toolkit

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Under each chapter heading the key requirements are listed. You should aim to have full evidence for each. Where the evidence is only partial or missing you will need to have an action plan setting out how and when you will comply.

Some of the chapters in the White Paper cover similar themes. You should therefore recognise that the issue you are focussing on may also be covered in other parts of the toolkit.

Alongside each question in the left-hand column, we indicate where we feel you should have the issue already covered and the practice in place (marked P). Where we feel that you should be planning to adopt the practice/policy we use the notation A (for ‘to be adopted’/‘to be actioned’).

And lastly, do think about the process you will use to undertake the self-assessment, who you will involve and how. It goes without saying that residents need to play a key part.

## Glossary

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<b>AHP</b>	Affordable Homes Programme
<b>ALMO</b>	Arms-Length Management Organisation
<b>ASB</b>	Anti-Social Behaviour
<b>CME</b>	Continuous Market Engagement
<b>EICR</b>	Electrical Installation Condition Report
<b>GLA</b>	Greater London Authority
<b>RSH</b>	Regulator of Social Housing
<b>MHCLG</b>	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
<b>SHWP</b>	Social Housing White Paper
<b>TSM</b>	Tenant Satisfaction Measures
<b>TMO</b>	Tenant Management Organisation

**The provisions in the White Paper apply to England only.**



## Chapter one: To be safe in your home

In the Charter the Government sets out that ensuring good health through good quality, safe and decent homes has been at the cornerstone of developing social housing over the last 100 years or so. However, the tragedy at Grenfell Tower shook public trust in building safety and revealed significant failings. The Government claims the White Paper will put residents back at the heart of building safety and goes further in delivering changes to ensure that every social housing resident is safe in their home.



### **The White Paper sets out the Government's achievement to date:**

- Up to £400m has been made available to social sector landlords to fund the removal and replacement of unsafe cladding of aluminium composite materials on residential social housing buildings over 18 metres, and Ministers have announced a further £1bn of grant funding to cover the costs of remediating unsafe non-aluminium composite materials on residential buildings over 18 metres
- The Building Safety Bill<sup>1</sup> has been published, which sets out an enhanced regulatory regime for all buildings, including a more stringent fire and structural safety regime for higher-risk buildings, with residents having a strong voice in the system
- A Fire Safety Consultation exercise has been initiated on Government proposals to implement the recommendations in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 1 report that require changes to the law
- The Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group has been created, bringing together social landlords and residents from across the country to test approaches to engagement on building safety
- The Fire Safety Bill<sup>2</sup> has been published which will clarify the scope of the Fire Safety Order in its application to the structure, external walls and flat entrance doors in multi-occupied residential buildings.

### **Under the White Paper the Government proposes to:**

- Legislate to strengthen the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer regulation objectives to explicitly include safety
- Legislate to require social landlords to identify a nominated person responsible for complying with their health and safety requirements
- Expect the Regulator of Social Housing to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding with the Health and Safety Executive to ensure effective sharing of information with the Building Safety Regulator
- Launch a consultation on mandating smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in social housing
- Consult on measures to ensure that social housing residents are protected from harm caused by poor electrical safety
- Build on the work of the Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement best practice group, supporting the development of statutory and good practice guidance on engaging residents in all tenures on safety issues.

### **Sources of evidence for questions:**

- Internal audit and specialist reports
- Stock survey/asset management data
- Business plans and financial projections
- Fire risk management policy (and practice) including fire risk assessments.

**Other HQN documents that may be of use:**  
[Landlord safety compliance toolkit](#)

<sup>1</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-building-safety-bill>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fire-safety-bill>

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
Overall, what preparations have you put in place to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Bill/Fire Safety Bill/Fire Safety Order? (P/A)			
What arrangements have you made to monitor the plans of the MHCLG and RSH to introduce the provisions of the Charter? (P/A)			
Have you appointed or put in place plans to appoint an 'Accountable Person' to oversee the safety of 'higher risk' residential buildings? (A)			
What data do you have on the safety of your housing stock especially in 'at risk' buildings? Is it sufficient to meet the provisions in the Charter? (P)			



<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>Do you have comprehensive data for all of your homes in respect of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas servicing?</li> <li>• Electrical testing?</li> <li>• Fire safety?</li> <li>• Lift safety?</li> <li>• Asbestos?</li> <li>• Legionella and water systems?</li> </ul> <p>Has this data been analysed to enable you to manage the safety of your housing effectively and efficiently? (P)</p> <p>[Note: HQN operates a network for social landlords that provides advice on health and safety issues relating to the management of social housing<sup>3</sup>]</p>			
<p>Are all recommendations from inspection and other visits followed up in a timely way? (P)</p>			

<sup>3</sup> <https://hqnetwork.co.uk/the-health-and-safety-network>

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
Have you carried out all tests on time and to a good standard for 100% of homes? (P)			
Have you followed up all recommendations from safety audits and assessments in a timely way? Where there are failures to follow up audit recommendations have you considered advising the RSH of these? (P)			
What arrangements do you have in place – or plan to put in place — to engage with residents about the safety of their homes? What are resident priorities on safety issues as they affect their homes? How do you gauge resident satisfaction with the safety of their homes? (P)			
How easy is it for residents to obtain information about the fire and structural protections of the buildings where they live? (P/A)			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
Have you reviewed your Complaints Policy (and associated procedures) so that residents can easily raise issues about the safety of their homes? (P)			
What have you done to install/test/replace <i>smoke alarms</i> in your housing stock? (P)			
What actions have you taken to install/test/replace <i>carbon monoxide (CO) alarms</i> in your housing stock? (P/A)			
Do all your properties have up to date Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs)? (P)			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
What arrangements have you in place to remove/replace dangerous cladding on your higher risk buildings? (P)			
Is your board/governing body fully aware of its responsibilities with regard to health and safety and testing? (P)			
To what extent does the board/governing body accept and understand that it is ultimately responsible for resident safety? (P)			
Does the board/governing body receive the information it needs? Are the reports for the board/governing body on safety matters relevant and up to date? (P)			

## Chapter two: To know how your landlord is performing

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The Government wants residents of social housing to be able to hold landlords to account for their actions and performance. To do this, residents need information on how their landlord is performing, what decisions it is making and who is responsible for those decisions. Under the Government's proposals, the RSH will create a set of clear, comparable tenant satisfaction measures on the services residents receive from landlords. These measures will also help the RSH develop its approach to regulating landlords under a proactive consumer regulation regime. The Government is proposing that the measures cover property condition and repairs; building safety; resident engagement; and neighbourhood management, including measures on anti-social behaviour. They will include both objective quantitative measures and resident perception indicators. There will also be measures recording the financial performance of social landlords (ones that are of particular interest to residents).

Social landlords are currently required to produce annual reports for their residents setting out their performance over a given 12 month period. For housing associations this data is often included in their Annual Accounts. However landlords are at liberty to select whatever performance indicators that they choose to share with their residents and other stakeholders. The Government wants to ensure that the performance of landlords are comparable and are looking to devise – through the RSH – a set of measures that will enable residents to judge the relative performance of individual landlords.

Currently, providers can use their own systems to measure performance. For resident perceptions, many landlords use the industry standard (STAR administered by HouseMark) while others might use *Trust Pilot* or *Friends and Family* measures as used in the NHS. To comply with the new system measuring resident satisfaction, landlords will need to revise their existing systems to match those developed by the RSH.





### **Under the White Paper, the Government will:**

- Expect the Regulator of Social Housing to bring in a set of tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) for all landlords on things that matter to residents
- Introduce a new access to information scheme for residents of housing associations and other private registered providers of social housing, so that information relating to landlords is easily accessible by residents
- Ensure landlords provide a clear breakdown of how their income is being spent, including levels of executive remuneration, to be published alongside their tenant satisfaction measures
- Require landlords to identify a senior person in their organisation who is responsible for ensuring they comply with the consumer standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing
- Expect landlords to report to every resident on such matters at least once a year, if not continuously, using new technology.

### **Sources of evidence:**

- Satisfaction surveys
- Management accounts and financial reports
- Benchmarking reports
- Annual Reports to residents.

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>Have you put in place arrangements to appoint a senior official who will be responsible for ensuring the delivery of good quality customer services? What will be the role and remit of this post holder? Where will this person fit into your structure and reporting lines? (A)</p>			
<p>What measures have you put in place to present performance information for residents in a clear and accessible way? How will these be adjusted to meet the requirements of the RSH? How have you involved your residents in this process? (P/A)</p>			
<p>In what ways do you make performance information available for residents through new technology such as mobile apps? How will you revise these methods so that they better meet the needs of your residents? How have you involved your residents when considering their interest in communications using new technology? (P/A)</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<b>Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM)</b>			
<p><i>Draft TSMs: Keeping properties in good repair</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What have you done to measure compliance with the Decent Homes standard? How do you report this performance to your residents and other stakeholders?</li> <li>• What measures do you have to gauge responsive repairs performance including completing jobs on a 'right first time' basis?</li> <li>• What do you do to measure resident satisfaction with your repairs and maintenance service? How do you ensure that these indicators are understood by service users? (P)</li> </ul>			
<p><i>Draft TSMs: Maintaining building safety</i></p> <p>How do you measure and then report on compliance with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas safety</li> <li>• Electrical safety</li> <li>• Fire safety</li> <li>• Asbestos management</li> </ul>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water safety</li> <li>• Lift safety (where applicable).</li> </ul> <p>How do you measure resident satisfaction with the health and safety of their homes and how is that reported to residents and other stakeholders in a clear and accessible way? (P)</p> <p>[Note: it is recognised that this will be largely around resident perceptions of safety issues]</p>			
<p><i>Draft TSMs: Effective handling of complaints</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you manage and report on your handling of complaints?</li> <li>• How do you measure the number, scale and type of complaints from your residents?</li> <li>• How do you gauge the number/percentage of complaints resolved within timescales agreed with your residents?</li> </ul>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you assess resident satisfaction with your handling of complaints? What arrangements do you have in place to measure resident satisfaction with your complaints framework? (P)</li> </ul>			
<p><i>Draft TSMs: Respectful and helpful engagement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you measure complaints relating to the fairness and/or respect shown to your residents? [Note: this is likely to be a new measure for most landlords; recordings of phone calls received from users would help to track courtesy, speed and quality of response]</li> <li>How do you gauge resident satisfaction with the methods you use to listen to your service users and their concerns? How do you assure they are 'fit for purpose'?</li> <li>To what extent are your residents satisfied with how you engage with them? How often do you review the methods used? (P/A)</li> </ul>			



<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p><i>Draft TSMs: Responsible neighbourhood management:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you measure the condition of communal areas?</li> <li>• Do they meet the standards of cleanliness you set?</li> <li>• How do you gauge the scale, type and nature of complaints relating to communal areas?</li> <li>• How do you measure resident satisfaction with your actions to keep communal areas clean and safe? How regularly do you review those arrangements with affected residents?</li> <li>• What arrangements are in place to assess resident satisfaction with your contribution to keeping neighbourhoods clean, tidy and well managed? How good are your caretaking, grass cutting and graffiti cleaning services (for instance)?</li> <li>• How do you measure the scale, type and nature of resident complaints relating to anti-social behaviour?</li> <li>• In what ways do you measure resident satisfaction with your handling of anti-social behaviour? (P)</li> </ul>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p><i>Draft TSMs: Overall</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you measure overall resident satisfaction with your landlord services? How often do you review the methods of gauging satisfaction with your residents?</li> <li>• In what ways have you worked with residents to develop TSMs at neighbourhood/estate level? Do these TSMs meet the needs of relevant residents? (P)</li> </ul>			
<p><i>Draft Financial Measures</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive remuneration: How do/will you make available to your residents details about the remuneration of your Chief Executive Officer and other senior executives? Could you go further than the prospective requirements of the RSH and publish details of fees paid to Board members (where applicable)?</li> <li>• Efficiency and effectiveness: What arrangements do/will you make to provide clear and accessible information to your residents and other stakeholders on your management costs? (P/A)</li> </ul>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do/will you ensure residents and others are provided with a clear breakdown of how your income as a landlord is spent? [Note: it can be expected that any breakdown will include expenditure on (as a minimum) management, maintenance, capital works, interest charges and surpluses] (P/A)</li> </ul> <p>[Note: HQN analysis of the Global Accounts<sup>4</sup> data held by the RSH can help landlords with many of the potential requirements in this context]</p>			
<b>For housing associations only – local authorities are already obliged to comply with the Freedom of Information legislation that applies to statutory bodies</b>			
<p><i>Access to Information scheme</i></p> <p>How do/will you make arrangements to give access to information held by your housing association to third parties about matters related to the management of your social housing? How do/will you ensure this is equivalent to the Freedom of Information provisions that apply to local housing authorities (and other public bodies)? (A)</p>			

<sup>4</sup> <https://hqnetwork.co.uk/news/costs-soar-88-what-happened-to-value-for-money-and-how-do-you-compare-3219>

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>How do/will you ensure that you provide information under these provisions on a timely basis and within likely time limits set by the RSH? (A)</p>			
<p>What procedures do you plan to put in place that will enable residents to complain about non compliance with the proposed provisions on accessing information on the management of your social housing? (A)</p>			

## Chapter three: To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

The Government notes in the White Paper the Housing Ombudsman delivers a vital service to ensure disputes are resolved and residents receive redress where appropriate. Ministers want residents to be able to raise concerns about failing services without fear and get swift and effective resolution when they do. Ministers were told some residents found it difficult to make a complaint and that the process took too long. Furthermore, it can sometimes take months for complaints to be resolved, or for residents to be able to access the Housing Ombudsman.

The White Paper notes that the Government has already put in train the removal of the 'democratic filter' which will help residents gain readier access to the Housing Ombudsman. The resources available to the Ombudsman and the service's powers have also been enhanced. The White Paper will further strengthen the role of the Housing Ombudsman.





## Under the White Paper the Government will:

- Support improved complaint handling by landlords and hold them to account through stronger action by the Housing Ombudsman
- Keep the Housing Ombudsman's powers (and compliance with them) under review and consider ways to strengthen them, including the option of legislation to put the Complaint Handling Code<sup>5</sup> on a statutory footing
- Run an awareness campaign so social housing residents know their rights, are confident in navigating their routes to complain, and are aware of how to escalate a complaint to get redress where needed
- Ensure lessons are learned and maintain residents' confidence in the Housing Ombudsman Service through the appointment by the Ombudsman of an independent reviewer by March 2021 to examine any complaints made about the service that the Housing Ombudsman provides
- Formalise and strengthen the relationship between the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman by introducing a statutory requirement for both bodies to co-operate with each other in undertaking their responsibilities in holding landlords to account
- Make the Housing Ombudsman a statutory consultee for any proposal concerning changes to the Regulator of Social Housing's economic and consumer standards
- Make the Regulator of Social Housing a statutory consultee for any changes to the Housing Ombudsman Scheme
- From March 2021, publish on the Housing Ombudsman's website, reports on the complaints the Housing Ombudsman has handled for individual landlords, as well as the determinations on individual cases.

## Sources of evidence

- Reports on complaint cases/trends for boards/governing bodies
- Self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code
- Analysis of Housing Ombudsman landlord reports
- Detailed examination of a sample of complaint cases
- Evidence of organisational learning from complaints
- Internal audit and other assessments of complaint handling
- Customer feedback from focus groups/surveys on complaint handling/scrutiny reviews
- Information available in the public domain (including social media).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/>

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>Have you complied with the new requirements of the Complaint Handling Code, including submitting your self-assessment by 31 December 2020? If so, what did you learn from your self assessment? How will you put that learning into practice? (P)</p>			
<p>How have you involved residents in your complaint handling procedures? Have you created residents panels (or similar) to engage with your residents on complaint handling? (P)</p>			
<p>How have you publicised your approach to complaint handling? How satisfied are your residents with the approach you have taken? (P)</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
What measures have you taken to advise your residents about the services available from the Housing Ombudsman to assist them to resolve complaints about the delivery of your housing services? (P)			
Using the Complaint Handling Code, how can you demonstrate to your residents that you are addressing complaints swiftly and effectively? Are you able to respond quickly to any requests for information by the Housing Ombudsman to meet their new shorter timescales and avoid being named and shamed on their website? (P/A)			
How are you making use of the new service offered by the Housing Ombudsman to improve your complaint handling, including through mediation? (P/A)			



<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
Are you monitoring the insight reports and performance data published by the Housing Ombudsman and, through them, identifying the opportunities to improve your services? (P/A)			
The Complaint Handling Code gives the Housing Ombudsman stronger powers to require landlords to provide any information it needs within a reasonable timeframe. What have you done to ensure you can comply with this requirement? (P)			
How are you picking up complaints made on social media, Google, Trust Pilot, etc? What systems do you in place to deal with complaints made through social media? (P)			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>The Government is planning to run an awareness campaign about how social housing residents can raise complaints with landlords and about the role of the Housing Ombudsman in assisting those residents resolve their complaints. How will you ensure that your residents are made aware of this publicity campaign and its impact on them? How are you preparing your response given the likely increase in complaints as a result of publishing your Complaints policy more widely and/or the MHCLG awareness campaign? (A)</p>			
<p>What plans have you put in place to publicise your own complaint handling and the role of the Housing Ombudsman in investigating and resolving complaints? Are you planning to use social media, newsletters, rent account statements, etc to reach as many residents as possible about this initiative? In what ways have you consulted with your residents about the ways they want to be informed of this type of initiative? (A)</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>How will you process complaints that will meet the new requirements set by the Housing Ombudsman given the prospective removal of the 'democratic filter' associated with the existing framework? Have you assessed your proposed arrangements against those outlined in the Charter? (A)</p>			
<p>From March 2021, the Housing Ombudsman will publish the details of cases it has determined on its website. How are you preparing to respond to the potential publication of cases involving your organisation? Have you put in place systems that would enable you to change practices following potential adverse judgements by the Housing Ombudsman? How will you report these cases to your residents, boards/governing bodies and other stakeholders? (P/A)</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>The Housing Ombudsman is engaging more directly with residents of social housing. How will you ensure your own residents can be involved in 'Meet the Ombudsman' events and similar? (P/A)</p>			

## Chapter four: To be treated with respect, backed by a strong regulator for tenants

The Government acknowledges that the current regime of consumer regulation is not strong enough to ensure social landlords (both local authorities and housing associations) deliver to the expectations set out in the new Charter. In this chapter the Government sets out how a new consumer regulation function will be established within the Regulator of Social Housing that is proactive and holds all landlords to account for the services they deliver. Alongside this, the current approach to economic regulation will be maintained to ensure the sector remains strong and sustainable.

The Government recognises that implementing the reforms set out in the White Paper will involve extensive engagement with the sector to make sure the proposals will work in practice. The RSH will be expected to consult with landlords and residents as the regulator designs the reformed consumer regulation regime to make sure it delivers the outcomes sought by service users.

Although the Green Paper<sup>6</sup> published in 2018 contained extensive references to the stigma experienced by many social housing residents, this issue is not a major feature of the Charter. Nevertheless social landlords need to do more to tackle stigma in social housing. Accordingly, there are several questions posed below on stigma that social landlords should consider as they seek to develop better relations with their residents.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/social-housing-green-paper-a-new-deal-for-social-housing>

## Under the White Paper, the Government will:

- Transform the Regulator of Social Housing so it proactively monitors and drives landlords' compliance with its consumer standard
- Remove the 'serious detriment test' and introduce routine inspections for the largest landlords (with over 1,000 homes) every four years
- Change the Regulator of Social Housing's objectives to explicitly cover safety and transparency, and work with it to review its consumer standards to ensure they are up to date and deliver its revised objectives
- Give the Regulator of Social Housing the power to publish a Code of Practice on the consumer standards to be clearer on what landlords are required to deliver
- Strengthen the Regulator of Social Housing's enforcement powers to tackle failing landlords and to respond to new challenges facing the sector, by removing the cap on the level of fines it can issue, introducing Performance Improvement Plans for landlords failing to comply, reducing the notice period for surveys on the condition of properties, and introducing a new power to arrange emergency repairs if needed where a survey uncovers evidence of systemic landlord failures
- Make it explicit that provisions in contracts between local authorities and arms-length management organisations or tenant management organisations would be deemed void if they hindered the Regulator of Social Housing in its exercise of its powers
- Review the statutory Right to Manage guidance
- Set out an expectation for all landlords to self-refer breaches with the regulatory standards

- Strengthen the Regulator of Social Housing's powers to provide robust economic regulation of private registered providers
- Require the Regulator of Social Housing to set up an Advisory Committee to provide independent and unbiased advice on discharging its functions.

## Sources of evidence:

- Landlord self-assessment against consumer standards
- Internal audit and specialist reports on consumer standards
- Recordings of first point of contact/performance of customer contact centre
- Full breakdown and analysis of complaints
- Surveys of resident satisfaction on service delivery
- Outputs from focus groups with residents.

*"We recommend that the Regulator of Social Housing retains the principle of co-regulation..."* (White Paper paragraph 51)

## What is meant by co-regulation?

It is for the board or council to meet the standards. The Regulator of Social Housing needs to be sure that you are doing this. So in a sense the efforts are co-operative. What happens when things go wrong?

Under the current rules you must tell the Regulator of Social Housing about any breaches that may place tenants at risk of serious harm. It is for the Regulator of Social Housing to decide what action it then takes. When the Charter is in place this so-called "serious detriment" test will disappear. That means the Regulator of Social Housing can take action in many more cases. In reality it is far from easy to define "serious detriment".



Even the Charter makes no attempt to do so. All it says is that “...the serious detriment test...[is]... where there is a risk of, or actual, serious harm to tenants.” Of course this is tautological so the best course of action is – if in doubt seek advice.

Questions to test your approach to co-regulation:

- Have you arrangements in place to check that you meet all the consumer standards?
- How do you know these work well – are you getting real assurance or fake-reassurance?
- Is the data you use reliable? How do you know? Who produced it? Are they qualified to do so?
- What are the sample sizes that generate the red, amber and green ratings for compliance that so many use? Are you really looking at the whole truth?
- How do you define “serious detriment”? Do you have a protocol for advising the Regulator of Social Housing promptly when you think you may have breached it?
- Do you have improvement plans in place to rectify any defects?

Keep a watchful eye on the Charter as it evolves – you will need a new protocol for when you must inform the Regulator of Social Housing about a wider range of possible breaches.

**Other HQN documents on this topic:**  
[Consumer standards toolkit](#)

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>What plans do you have (if any) to restructure your organisation to meet the White Paper's provisions on consumer regulation? How have you involved your governing body and your residents in any decisions to reorganise service delivery to meet the regulator's consumer standards? (A)</p>			
<p>How will you demonstrate that you meet the requirement to operate in a co-regulatory way with the RSH? To what extent do you feel your governing body understands its role in working with the RSH to meet the regulator's consumer standards? (P/A)</p> <p>[Note: local authorities are likely to be less familiar with the workings of the RSH than housing associations; local authorities will need to consider how to develop a co regulatory approach with the RSH]</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>For those providers with over 1,000 homes, how are you preparing for a regime of inspections of the RSH's consumer standards? In what way are you set up to meet the requirements of a short notice inspection? What systems have you (or are putting) in place to minimise the risk of being subject to inspections where there have been potential breaches of the consumer standards? (A)</p>			
<p>How do you plan to publicise your response to RSH judgements on your performance and, in particular, to show compliance with those judgements? (A)</p>			
<p>What measures have/will you put in place to ensure that you meet the requirements of the regulator's Code of Practice<sup>7</sup> on consumer standards? (A)</p>			

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards-procedures-and-guidance>

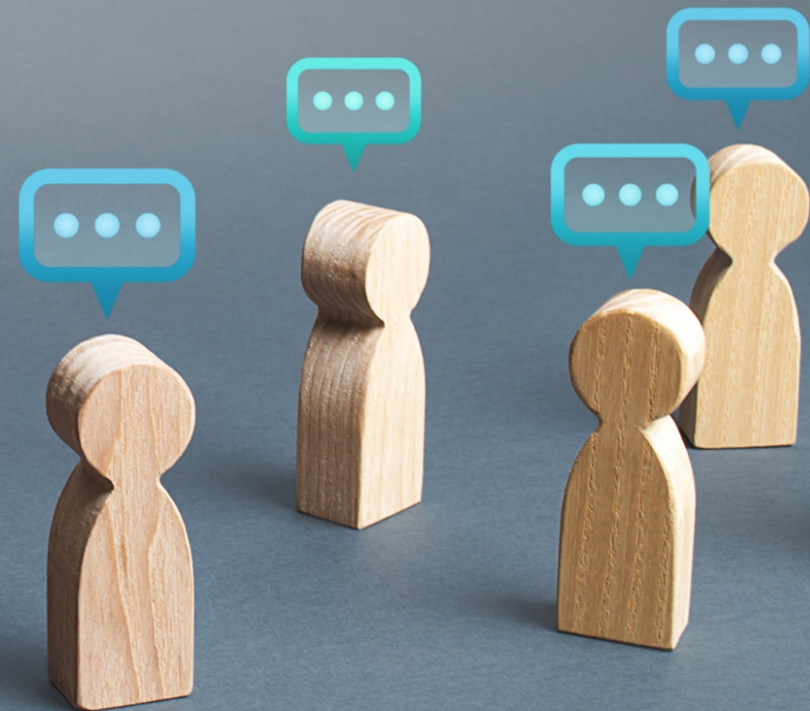
<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>How are you preparing to produce Performance Improvement Plans if you fail to comply with a consumer standard? (A)</p>			
<p>What are the actions you are taking to ensure that you can survey properties with 48 hours when residents claim they are living in unacceptable or unsafe conditions and this is endorsed by the regulator? (A)</p>			
<p>How will you ensure the RSH has unfettered access to review the performance of outsourced housing services? (A)</p> <p>[Note: the White Paper makes it clear landlords are responsible for the performance of services delivered by third parties; this could be ALMOs and TMOs in the local authority sector or outsourced housing providers in the local authority or housing association sectors.]</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>What mechanisms have you put in place to enable you to self-refer to the RSH because of potential/actual breaches in the consumer standards? How are you involving your governing body in this process? (P/A)</p> <p>[Note: housing associations are already familiar with this process in relation to the RSH's economic standards; this will be a new requirement for local authorities]</p>			
<p>How does your organisation address the stigma many residents feel living in the social housing sector? How do you ensure your staff communicate respectfully with your residents? Do you review the contents of correspondence with residents and the signage in offices and estates to ensure they are appropriate and respectful? How do you involve residents in addressing the stigma they may feel living in social housing? (P)</p>			

## Chapter five: To have your voice heard by your landlord

The Government recognises the best landlords engage well with their residents and listen to them with respect. Furthermore, the Government acknowledges the important work undertaken by resident-led organisations such as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service and the See the Person campaign. Many landlords are also praised for their actions addressing the impact of Covid-19 on their residents and the communities where they live. However, Ministers heard from some residents that their landlords did not effectively engage with them – or even listen to them in a meaningful way. On too many occasions residents reported that they were patronised, ignored or treated with disrespect by their landlords.

The Government plans to address this problem.





**Under the White Paper, the Government will:**

- Expect the Regulator of Social Housing to require landlords to seek out best practice and consider how they can continually improve the way they engage with social housing residents
- Deliver a new opportunities and empowerment programme for social housing residents, to support more effective engagement between landlords and residents, and to give residents tools to influence their landlords and hold them to account
- Review professional training and development to ensure residents receive a high standard of customer service.

**Sources of evidence:**

- Reports on resident engagement
- Analysis of board and other papers for impact of resident voice
- Reports on resident representation on governing bodies, decision making panels, etc
- Focus groups, surveys and interviews with residents
- Scan of social media; analysis of relevant social media posts
- Details in Annual Report for residents about scale and effectiveness of engagement with service users
- Review of staff skills and training plans.

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>How well do you know your residents? What information do you hold on your residents that will help you understand the scale and nature of engagement they are interested in? (P)</p>			
<p>The White Paper expects landlords to 'tailor their engagement' with residents. Taking into account the characteristics of your residents and their different levels of interest in the services provided by landlords, how do you plan to meet this objective? (P/A)</p>			
<p>In what ways do you offer the full spectrum of engagement to your residents — from message-based surveys of repairs services to resident representation on decision-making bodies? (P)</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>How do you capture good practice by other landlords and in other sectors on resident/consumer engagement? How do you put that good practice into effect in your own organisation? What can you do to ensure there is 'continuous improvement' in your engagement arrangements with residents? (P/A)</p>			
<p>In what ways can you improve how residents scrutinise your performance as a landlord? What training and development opportunities could enhance this role of your residents? (P/A)</p>			
<p>The Government believes landlords have a role in combating loneliness experienced by some residents. Loneliness has been exacerbated by Covid-19. In what ways can you work with individuals, community groups, voluntary bodies and statutory agencies to address loneliness as it affects residents? (A)</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>How has your organisation assessed what can be done to combat mental health problems suffered by residents? What practices have you introduced to help relevant residents cope with mental illness? (A)</p>			
<p>What actions are you taking to ensure that you can engage with 'hard to reach' groups? (P)</p> <p>[Note: 'hard to reach' groups are often those that are socially and economically excluded; they may live in communities where there are significant numbers of ethnic minority households]</p>			
<p>How do you ensure frontline staff deliver the best possible service to residents? Is the training offered to these staff members 'fit for purpose'? When did you last review this type of training? How do you involve residents in these reviews? (P/A)</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>How can you develop your organisation's leaders to drive culture change that ensures your staff treat residents with courtesy and respect? What training for senior staff is needed so that your organisation can deliver services that are resident-focussed and to the highest possible standard? (P/A)</p>			



## Chapter six: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in

The Government expects social housing landlords to provide decent, well-maintained homes and keep estates/neighbourhoods safe and clean. However Ministers are aware that some residents experience poor neighbourhood management and suffer from the inadequate upkeep of the buildings where they live. Shared spaces managed by social landlords can also be of substandard quality. Some of these issues have been magnified by Covid-19; some residents have struggled to find green spaces to exercise and others have experienced isolation, loneliness and the challenge of dealing with anti-social behaviour.

The Government plans to change this and ensure all social housing residents can enjoy good neighbourhoods and access to green space. Ministers are committed to delivering good quality decent homes and neighbourhoods for social housing residents, alongside access to green space and support for wellbeing.



### **Under the White Paper, the Government will:**

- Review the Decent Homes Standard<sup>8</sup> to consider if it should be updated, including how it can better support the decarbonisation and energy efficiency of social homes, and improve communal and green spaces
- Continue to engage with the latest evidence on the impact of housing conditions on health, including Covid-19 transmission, and actively consider options to mitigate these impacts
- Review professionalisation to consider how well housing staff are equipped to work with people with mental health needs and encourage best practice for landlords working with those with mental health needs
- Clarify the roles of agencies involved in tackling anti-social behaviour and signpost residents to those agencies who can give them the most appropriate support and assistance when faced with anti- social behaviour
- Consider the results of the allocations evidence collection exercise findings to ensure housing is allocated in the fairest way possible and achieves the best outcomes for local places and communities.

### **Sources of evidence:**

- Reality checks of estates/voids/sign-ups
- Stock condition surveys
- Relevant reports and policies on energy efficiency, sustainability, anti social behaviour, etc
- Resident feedback and satisfaction.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/decent-homes-standard-review>

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>To what extent does your housing stock meet the existing Decent Homes Standard? How do you ensure that you continue to meet that Standard? (P)</p>			
<p>Have you developed Decent Homes ‘Plus’ standards that meet your residents’ needs and the Government’s objectives? Specifically how are you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the communal areas and green spaces on estates including linking your practices/plans to the National Framework of Green Infrastructure Standards<sup>9</sup> and other Government initiatives</li> <li>• Addressing health and safety measures in residents’ homes and on estates</li> <li>• Improving methods to combat criminal and anti social behaviour (ASB) experienced by your residents</li> <li>• Enhancing energy efficiency of your housing stock and introducing measures to decarbonise your housing (P/A)</li> </ul>			

<sup>9</sup> <https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2020/09/30/enhancing-englands-urban-green-spaces/>

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>On the mental well-being of residents, how flexible are you on permitting pet ownership by residents (where appropriate) and how well trained are your staff in dealing with residents that have mental health issues? [Note: see Chapter four also] (A)</p>			
<p>Residents of social housing are more likely than other groups to be victims of criminal and anti social behaviour. In addressing this issue how are you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measuring incidences of ASB in a way that helps you address this problem for your residents</li> <li>• Clarifying the responsibility for dealing with ASB with other statutory bodies</li> <li>• Advising residents about how they can use Community Trigger provisions to call for multi agency approaches to address persistent cases of ASB</li> <li>• Looking at ways to design out crime on estates with reference, for instance, to the Police's Secured by Design scheme</li> <li>• Working with vulnerable residents to ensure that they are not susceptible to being groomed by gangs. (P/A)</li> </ul>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
What mechanisms have you put in place to encourage integration in local communities to combat segregation between your residents and others living in blocks/on estates? (A)			
To what extent have you followed the Integrated Communities Strategy Action Plan (2018) <sup>10</sup> to build integrated communities and challenge segregation? (P/A)			
Following the publication of the Government's review of the allocation of social housing <sup>11</sup> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have you been working with your partners (local authorities with housing associations and vice versa) on ensuring social housing is allocated more efficiently?</li> </ul>			

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-communities-action-plan>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/social-housing-allocations-guidance>

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What have you been doing to remove the barriers to access your housing by homeless households?</li> <li>• How have you ensured vulnerable households can navigate allocation systems for your housing?</li> <li>• How have you improved access to suitable homes for disabled people? (P/A)</li> </ul>			
<p>How do you identify domestic abuse that affects your residents? How do you support residents that are victims of such abuse? Is the policy you have on domestic abuse 'fit for purpose' (if you have one)? (P/A)</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>How do you ensure households linked to the armed forces have reasonable access to your housing (under the Armed Forces Covenant<sup>12</sup>)? In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do service personnel and veterans with mental health conditions have priority access to your housing?</li> <li>• Have you ensured that those that have served in the armed forces do not have to meet local connection tests to access your housing?</li> <li>• Have you formally recorded that those associated with the armed forces have applied for housing with you so that their applications can be considered appropriately? (P/A)</li> </ul>			

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-supporting-information>



## Chapter seven: To be supported to take your first step to ownership

The White Paper is largely focussed on ensuring social housing landlords deliver better services to their residents. This will be achieved through a significant enhancement of consumer regulation as framed by Government and executed by the Regulator of Social Housing. The final part of the Charter takes a different tack by reaffirming the Government's commitment 'to increase the supply of new and beautiful social homes'. It also outlines the Government's objective to ensure as many social residents as possible have the opportunity to buy a home of their own.

The White Paper notes that over 486,000 new affordable homes have been built since 2010, including 142,400 for social rent. Furthermore the Charter outlines that in September 2020 Ministers announced the details of the Government's £11.5bn Affordable Homes Programme<sup>13</sup>, which will deliver up to 180,000 homes. Half of these homes will be available for social and affordable rent, and the remainder for affordable home ownership through a new shared ownership model (when distributed by Homes England). As a condition of the funding, the Government is giving all those residents who will benefit from the new investment the Right to Shared Ownership. Part of the AHP will also be set aside for the First Homes programme that will provide housing for first time buyers at a 30% discount against market values.

Additionally the Government has introduced a new £3bn Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme which aims to provide long- term, low cost and fixed rate debt finance to registered providers



<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/introduction-to-the-affordable-homes-programme-2021-2026>

Generally the Charter applies equally to local authorities and housing associations. However as this chapter focuses on development activity, most of the policy initiatives are directed at housing associations. The Toolkit makes clear where issues are addressed at housing associations or local authorities (or both).

The Toolkit covers bids for funding through the Affordable Homes Programme. However it is important to recognise that the focus of many providers is on fulfilling their commitments under the *existing* AHP and addressing disrupted delivery issues because of the pandemic. There has also been the switching of investment priorities to fire safety work. Furthermore the bidding process is more complicated than hitherto with some providers acquiring 'strategic partner' status enabling them to negotiate with Homes England on development funding on an ongoing basis. Other providers are accessing AHP funding through the continuous market engagement (CME) route.

This part of the White Paper does not announce any new policy initiatives. Instead there is a reaffirmation of measures that have already been set out in previous statements by Ministers. The other key documents that providers should refer to are the White Paper 'Planning for the Future,' MHCLG, August 2020<sup>14</sup> and 'The Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026,' MHCLG, September 2020. Also, on design issues, reference should be made to the updated 'National Design Guide,' MHCLG, January 2021.

Government policy on affordable housing activity and ownership options for social housing residents is fast moving. HQN members are advised to ensure they are up to date with relevant policy developments by regularly accessing the HQN website and monitoring relevant MHCLG, Homes England and GLA announcements.

In this section of the Toolkit the notations setting out that any actions should already be in hand or planned is deemed inapplicable.



<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-for-the-future>

### **The Charter sets out that Government has:**

- Introduced a new shared ownership model that (it is claimed) will be fairer, more consumer-friendly and more accessible
- Announced that around half of the homes delivered by the new Affordable Homes Programme through Homes England will be for affordable home ownership
- Provided funding to the Greater London Authority which will ensure that at least 50% of AHP funding is for homes let at social rent; the other 50% or less will be a mix of London Living Rent and shared ownership
- Announced a new Right to Shared Ownership, meaning that most new grant-funded housing association homes for rent will give residents the opportunity to purchase a 10% (or more) stake in their home and to purchase further shares in future
- Made a commitment to ensure new social housing supply is well-designed and that social landlords develop beautiful homes
- Amended the National Planning Policy Framework and published a new national design guide to emphasise the importance of beauty and good design
- Emphasised through the new National Design Guide the importance of building beautiful and well-designed social homes.

### **Sources of evidence:**

- Housing association/local authority/ALMO development plans
- Land availability reports
- Details about sites identified for potential regeneration, including shopping/commercial centres impacted by Covid-19
- Housing Needs Assessments
- Analyses of local housing markets including demographic information; income levels; and market rents and house prices
- Internal audit and other reports on service charges (administration, accuracy, etc)
- Reports on leaseholder management activity including performance, costs, stock condition, capital programming, etc.



<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<b>For housing associations</b>  How have you responded to the conditions that the Government has placed on the Affordable Homes Programme announced in September 2020? Were you prepared to bid for grant to build new housing where residents have the Right to Shared Ownership? What elements of the AHP will you seek to access? How are you involving your governing bodies on decisions relating to bids for AHP? [Note: this will also apply to those local authorities and ALMOs that are interested in accessing funding from the AHP for some of their development activity]			
<b>For housing associations</b>  Have you carried out an assessment of the costs and benefits of accessing the funding available from the Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme <sup>15</sup> ?			

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-guarantee-scheme-rules-affordable-homes-guarantee-scheme-2020/affordable-homes-guarantee-scheme-2020>

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>What has that analysis shown you? If you are using the scheme for low cost debt funding, how will it assist you with your future development programme? How are you involving your governing bodies on decisions relating to bids for this scheme?</p>			
<p><b>For housing associations and local authorities</b></p> <p>There are proposals to replace the S106 regime as a means of securing new affordable housing through the planning process. The Infrastructure Levy (as proposed) would still deliver affordable housing at existing levels (according to the White Paper). As a social landlord, how are you preparing for the introduction of the new planning framework? What arrangements are you putting in place to negotiate with private developers about implementing the new regime to maximise the provision of additional social housing?</p> <p>For local planning authorities, how are you working with developers and social housing providers to ensure the existing and proposed system of developer contributions maximises new social housing in your area?</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<b>For local authorities</b>  The Government is considering ways Right to Buy receipts can be used more flexibly to enable local authorities to build more affordable housing. How are you planning to use such flexibilities if they are introduced?			
<b>For housing associations and local authorities</b>  The White Paper sees a role for community-led groups (including community land trusts and housing co-operatives) as a means of delivering high quality affordable housing which cannot be provided through other means. How can you work with community-led groups to deliver affordable housing for those people not seeking affordable housing through traditional routes? Can you offer funding, expertise, land or other resources for such groups to help achieve their objectives?			



<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p><b>For housing associations and local authorities</b></p> <p>For your new build schemes, how are you using the Government-commissioned 'Building Better, Building Beautiful'<sup>16</sup> report to influence your house building programmes? Also how are you using the National Design Guide<sup>17</sup> (published under the National Planning Policy Framework) to help with the design of your new build housing? How are you involving governing bodies in the design of your new build schemes?_How are you working with existing and prospective residents about the design of the housing where some of them and their peers will live?</p>			

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<b>For housing associations</b>  What has been your response to the Government's shared ownership model which enables residents to acquire as little as 10% of a property under revised shared ownership terms? Have you worked up a scheme that will enable this model to work for both shared owners and your own organisation? If yes, how have you tested the model under different operating/financial conditions?			
<b>For housing associations</b>  The new shared ownership model means residents part buying properties on the new terms will not face major repair bills for ten years after purchase. Assuming you accept these conditions, how will you ensure these repairs can be funded in future? What processes will you put in place to enable this condition to be successfully implemented for shared owners and your own organisation?			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p><b>For housing associations and local authorities</b></p> <p>The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for all leaseholders, both in the social and private sectors, and ensuring consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. The White Paper reforms are designed to benefit leaseholders in the social housing sector by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increasing transparency on overall spend and performance by landlords;</li> <li>• putting a stronger focus on managing neighbourhoods and communal spaces; and</li> <li>• ensuring better engagement so that the concerns of leaseholders can be heard</li> </ul> <p>How do you keep your leaseholders advised of your performance and how you spend the service charges they pay? What methods do you use to consult with leaseholders about the information they want from you? Are they satisfied with the methods you use?</p>			

<b>Question</b> <b>P = in place/should be in place</b> <b>A = to be adopted/actioned.</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially done</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<p>How do you consult with leaseholders about the management of the neighbourhoods and the communal areas where they live? How satisfied are leaseholders with the influence they have over the management of the places where they live and for which you are responsible?</p> <p>How do you involve your governing body in the strategic management of your leasehold stock? How can leaseholders engage with your governing body about the management of the places where they live, including any major repairs programmes affecting their homes?</p>			

## Fast, practical guidance on everything to do with housing

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