

**Responses to the
consultation on our
Business Plan
2021-22**

Introduction

As a public service that is funded by subscription from our members, it is important that we are accountable for the way we use our resources. We are an arms-length body of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government so we are accountable to parliament, but we also have a duty to:

- the landlords who are members of our Scheme
- residents who have every right to expect prompt and proper consideration of complaints by their landlords and by us, and who ultimately fund our Scheme through their rent.

In November to December 2020, we consulted on our Business Plan for 2020-21. The consultation document outlined our next steps to grow and improve the service building on changes introduced over the last year. It is set within the context of the Social Housing White Paper, the continued challenge of Covid-19 and the Ombudsman's ongoing transformation programme.

The consultation invited comments on how we can develop our sector engagement work, promote learning and raise awareness of the role of our service and redress.

We would like to thank all those who took the time to respond. We considered all the comments provided. This document is not intended to cover the detail of all the responses received but provides a summary of the comments made.

The consultation process

We published the [consultation document](#) on our website on 24 November 2020, and the consultation ran for four weeks to 22 December 2020.

During the consultation period we:

- Published the consultation as an online survey and enabled responses to be sent to us directly by email
- Publicised the consultation through our website, a special consultation newsletter, social media, the housing press, targeted emails and a virtual roundtable discussion

We received 75 responses overall - 54 responses in total through the online survey (3 incomplete) and 21 by email. In addition, there were 23 participants at the roundtable discussion with representatives from landlords and sector.

The breakdown of responses is below but note that this does not add up to the overall number as some organisations attended the roundtable and submitted a written response:

- 64 individual landlords

- 6 from individual residents
- 2 from resident organisations – Tpas and Taroe
- 11 from other organisations – CIH, G320, ARCH, Nat Fed of ALMOs, Nat Fed of TMOs, Confederation of Co-op Housing, Regulator of Social Housing, Citizens Advice, Northern Housing Consortium, HQN and HouseMark

See Annex A for the list of those who responded.

Summary of responses

For this consultation we were asking for views and suggestions on developing particular areas of our work rather than seeking support on changes to our service provision or the fee. The consultation set out three open ended questions inviting comments:

Q1: Do you have any comments on our approach to raising resident awareness of the role of our Service and redress?

Q2: What learning would you like us to share and in what format?

Q3: Do you have any comments on our business plan overall?

Overall, the responses were positive with lots of constructive comments, ideas and suggestions.

Q1: Do you have any comments on our approach to raising resident awareness of the role of our Service and redress?

On this question, there was very strong support for setting up our new Resident Panel and the quarterly Meet the Ombudsman events for residents to be hosted by landlords. Many respondents commented that the Panel needed to have wide representation across residents and that the process for recruitment should be transparent. Further suggestions included working with other agencies such as advice agencies to raise awareness and providing more online tools for residents.

Q2: What learning would you like us to share and in what format?

On learning, there was general support for using digital channels and tailoring messages for different sizes of landlords and different roles within them. Using sector bodies to share information was also suggested together with asking the sector in advance for potential thematic report topics. Among the areas highlighted specifically for landlords were more sharing of good practice, case studies from all stages of our dispute resolution process, further guidance on a range of issues, facilitating peer to peer learning, examples of the top causes of maladministration and how to address them. For residents, suggestions included videos, training on how to make complaints and guidance to support tenant scrutiny.

Q3: Do you have any comments on our business plan overall?

In the general comments about the business plan, there were a number of requests asking for clarification on the new Access to Information scheme requirements and timescales. Digital development was also strongly supported, particularly for

submitting evidence and for real time progress updates, such as through a portal. There were a couple of comments related to value for money with one landlord saying they had felt the benefit of the increased fee in the last year and one requesting a performance-related or weighted fee.

The subscription fee for 2021-22 remains the same at £2.16 per unit.

Annex A: List of respondents (including roundtable participants)

From or on behalf of residents

- We received responses from six individual residents
- Tpas
- Taroe Trust

Trade bodies and other organisations

- Chartered Institute of Housing
- G320
- ARCH
- Nat Fed of TMOs
- Nat Fed of ALMOs
- Confederation of Co-op Housing
- Housemark
- HQN
- Northern Housing Consortium
- Citizens Advice
- Regulator of Social Housing

Individual landlords

- Anchor Hanover
- Ashfield District Council
- Basildon Council
- Berneslai Homes
- Brent
- Calico Homes
- CHP – Chelmer housing partnership
- City of Lincoln council
- City of York Council
- Clarion Housing Group
- Cornwall Council
- Cumbria Housing Group
- Curo
- Derby Homes
- Falcon Housing Association
- Grand Union Housing Group
- Lewisham Homes
- Hammersmith and Fulham Council
- Harlow Council
- Home Group
- Homes for Haringey

- Housing Plus group
- Hyde Housing Association
- Innisfree
- L&Q
- Leeds City Council
- Live West
- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- London borough of Enfield
- London borough of Redbridge
- London Borough of Waltham Forest
- Mabel Luke Almshouses
- Metropolitan Thames Valley
- Midland Heart
- Moat Homes
- Nottingham Community Housing Association
- One Manchester
- Ongo
- Onward Homes
- Orbit
- Oxford City council
- Paradigm
- Peabody
- Places for People
- Poole Housing Partnership
- Poplar Harca
- Raven Housing Trust
- Red Kite Community Housing
- Redditch Friends Housing Association
- Regenda
- Stockport Homes
- South Yorkshire Housing Association
- Southwark Council
- Southway Housing Trust
- Stonewater
- Thirteen Group
- Tower Hamlets Homes
- Town and Country Housing
- Vivid
- Wandle
- Waverley Borough Council
- WHG – Walsall Housing Group
- Wythenshawe Community Housing Group
- Yorkshire Housing