

# New government campaign to empower social housing residents to raise complaints and make things right

- Campaign to raise awareness and understanding of the complaints process for social housing residents
- Clear, straightforward advice on seeking redress from housing providers published
- Building on reforms in the 'Charter for Social Housing Residents' to speed up complaints process

Social housing residents will be helped with improving their living conditions through a new government campaign launched this week.

'Make Things Right' will help residents raise complaints if they are unhappy with their landlord and struggling to get problems resolved, with clear advice on how to progress issues to the Housing Ombudsman if necessary.

The launch of the new campaign is a commitment from the government as part of the social housing white paper – 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents' – which set out a comprehensive action plan to make landlords more accountable for the services they deliver.

The Charter aims to speed up the complaints procedure for social housing residents, by reducing decision times and ensuring effective resolution and improving access to the Housing Ombudsman.

The national campaign, 'Make Things Right', will run adverts on digital and social media channels, as well as music streaming sites, to raise awareness of the complaints process and barriers to these being progressed.

Housing Minister Eddie Hughes said:

The Charter for Social Housing Residents is clear that all social housing residents should receive a good service and reassurance that if you speak up, then things will be put right.

While most landlords work hard to put things right when they go wrong, we want to ensure that all residents know how to raise complaints if they have to, and how to approach the Housing Ombudsman to escalate their concern.

That is why we are launching this new campaign to ensure those living in the 4 million social homes across England know how to access the complaints process to provide a greater voice for residents and refocus the sector on its social mission.

Cllr James Jamieson, Local Government Association Chairman, said:

Councils want all residents, regardless of tenure, to have the security of a safe and well-maintained home which they are proud to live in.

It is really important that the voice of all social housing residents is heard, and councils are supportive of measures which improve standards and empower residents.

This will give them confidence in ensuring that action can be taken to improve living conditions, where it is required.

The Charter will make landlords more accountable for the services they deliver, including access to a new information scheme for residents of housing associations and introducing a set of resident satisfaction measures that landlords will have to report against.

It has been created to ensure all social housing residents are treated with respect and dignity and sets out what every resident should expect from their landlord:

1. To be safe in your home.
2. To know how your landlord is performing.
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly.
4. To be treated with respect.
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord.
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership.

This comes as Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government figures show that 59% of issues raised by social housing residents do not make it

through as an official complaint to the landlord, despite the resident being unhappy with the initial response received – with 35% of residents listing concerns around retaliation by landlords and neighbours as a reason for not raising an issue.

[Clear and straightforward advice for residents](#) on what steps need to be taken are available on the campaign webpage.

View the [campaign webpage](#).

The statistics are taken from a survey of 1,612 social housing residents (1,512 online and 100 telephone interviews) between 22 September and 1 October 2020.

See the '[Charter for Social Housing Residents](#)'.

The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted on 0300 111 3000. Phone lines are open Monday, Thursday and Friday from 9.15am to 5.15pm and half days on Tuesday and Wednesday from 9.15am to 1.15pm (except public holidays).

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## **[Elaine Bailey appointed to Health and Safety Executive Board](#)**

This appointment has been made following the Commissioner for Public Appointments' approval to appoint Elaine Bailey by exception, to support and lead the organisation whilst it recruits a permanent Member.

Elaine Bailey will assist with the Health and Safety Executive, taking on the role of the Building Safety Regulator and, in the interim, supporting its shadow regulatory role.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Thérèse Coffey, said:

Elaine's experience of building safety, as well as her work with tenants in a housing or high-rise building environment, will be an asset to the Board and its vital work in helping keep people safe.

Elaine Bailey said:

I am delighted to be taking up this role. It is vitally important that people are safe in their homes, feel safe in their homes and this is what we want to achieve at HSE. My thanks to Sarah Newton and to the Secretary of State for the opportunity to work towards achieving these goals.

HSE Chair, Sarah Newton, said:

Elaine Bailey brings a wealth of building safety expertise and experience to the HSE Board as our new Non-Executive Director.

Elaine is a staunch advocate of ensuring homes are safe and secure and her years of relevant experience and understanding of the housing sector will be a welcome and timely addition to the Board.

### **About Elaine Bailey:**

With many years' experience in the sector, Elaine has a wealth of relevant experience, a strong understanding of the housing sector, and is a strong advocate of ensuring homes are safe and secure.

Elaine was previously the Chief Executive of a social housing group, The Hyde Group, which responded early and positively to the emerging findings of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. Elaine has been a sector leader in implementing the recommendations from Dame Judith's independent review.

The Department will start a recruitment exercise in early 2021 to fill the role on a permanent basis.

### **Additional information:**

- Remuneration is £15,100 per annum for 30 days per annum.
- For more information about HSE please visit <https://www.hse.gov.uk/>.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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## **[‘A reel good design’ – new fishing rod licence images released](#)**

The Environment Agency (EA) has launched [new fishing rod licence designs](#) ahead of another popular fishing season.

The new images, designed by artist David Miller, are now available to all

anglers looking to renew their licences and to newcomers who are looking to join the sport for the first time. The images this year celebrate some of our most iconic species. The salmon and sea trout licence depicts a vibrant sea trout. A striking golden rudd is depicted on the 2-rod coarse and trout licence and a mighty stalking pike now features on 3-rod coarse and trout licences.

Last summer, the Environment Agency launched a campaign to highlight how fishing offers a fun, healthy and safe way to spend time outdoors and reconnect with nature as well as make use of the known wellbeing benefits of the activity. The Environment Agency is hopeful that the trend is set to continue in 2021 as the public are encouraged to see their licence not only a right to fish but as a licence to chill, a licence to connect with nature, and much more.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment at the Environment Agency said:

We are so pleased with David's beautiful designs for this year's rod licences. The income we receive from licence sales allows us to invest in fisheries and carry out vital improvements to protect and enhance our much-loved fish populations.

We hope David's designs encourage even more people to take up fishing and recognise the beauty of our natural environment and fish species.

Rod licence income is funded directly back into the Environment Agency's fisheries service across England and is crucial for the EA's continued investment in fisheries improvement projects, supporting healthy fish stocks as well as improvements to angling services.

Rod licence income has also allowed the EA to deliver and invest in vital projects with partners dedicated to opening up rivers for migratory and coarse fish. This includes a [flagship collaborative project, DNAire](#), which will open up over 60km of the river Aire for the first time in 150 years. The installation of fish and eel passes at: Armley, Kirkstall, Newlay and Saltaire are key to this project.

It is set to also provide placements for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) undergraduates and construction trainees alongside an environmental conservation apprenticeship to help young people secure employment across the sector.

Enjoy fishing and make sure you fish legally. Annual rod fishing licences are available from only £30. It's easy to buy online. [Get a fishing licence on GOV.UK.](#)

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# [Consultation launched on the future governance of open banking](#)

Press release

The CMA has launched a consultation on the future governance of Open Banking.



Open Banking is an initiative launched by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in 2017 following its [Retail Banking Market Investigation](#). It allows consumers and SMEs to share their bank account information securely with trusted intermediaries who can then use this information to help them save time and money by finding better products to suit their needs. In turn, open banking aims to place competitive pressure on the larger, established banks who have accounted for over 80% of the current account market for many years.

Since its establishment, Open Banking now has around 3 million active users and it is estimated that more than half of small and medium businesses use tools employing open banking functionality.

In order to implement open banking, the CMA required the 9 largest current account providers in Britain and Northern Ireland respectively to create and pay for an implementation entity – known now as the Open Banking Implementation Entity – and to appoint an implementation Trustee, approved by the CMA, to oversee the process.

The implementation phase of open banking is nearing completion and the [CMA is now consulting on what arrangements should be put in place for its governance in the next phase of its development](#).

Banking industry body UK Finance has submitted proposals that involve creating a new body, with a more broadly-based funding and governance model, to succeed OBIE. It is proposed that this body would take over OBIE's functions, other than compliance monitoring, which will be handled separately. The CMA will consider these proposals as part of its

consultation.

Interested stakeholders are being consulted on 3 main areas:

- Whether the successor organisation proposed by UK Finance proposals will be: independent and accountable; adequately funded; dedicated to serving the customer's interests; and robust and sustainable;
- What compliance monitoring arrangements will it be necessary for the CMA to put in place going forward;
- What transitional arrangements should be adopted and when should the process begin.

The CMA's consultation will run until 29 March 2021.

1. Find out more information on the [the future oversight of the CMA's open banking remedies consultation](#) page.
2. Open Banking now has around 3 million active users. This level of usage is likely to be further reinforced as HM Revenue and Customs starts using open banking payment products to collect tax.
3. A wide variety of [Open Banking products are now available](#), ranging from tools to help consumers find the best mortgage for them to apps that are designed to help the more vulnerable, for example alerting carers to unusual spending by their clients.
4. Find out more about [UK Finance Open Banking Futures](#).

Published 5 March 2021

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## [Social housing sector remains financially strong](#)

The Regulator of Social Housing has today (5 March) published the results of its latest [quarterly survey](#) of registered providers' financial health. The report covers the period from 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.

The sector remains financially strong with access to sufficient finance, despite the continuing challenges arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

The sector has good access to finance with total cash and undrawn facilities totalling £35.5 billion at the end of the quarter. The sector continues to attract considerable investment and has raised in total £113 billion in private finance. This includes £3 billion in new facilities during the quarter.

Capitalised repairs and maintenance spending increased to £455 million, a 50% increase on the previous quarter, although it was lower than forecast. Providers have reported ongoing delays as a result of lockdown restrictions;

however, outturn spend was more in line with levels seen before the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Investment in housing supply during the quarter was £3.4 billion, an increase of 42% on the previous quarter. This was higher than the forecast for contractually committed schemes. Sales receipts in the quarter totalled £1.7 billion; 17% higher than the forecast and reflecting the caution and uncertainty shown by providers in making forecasts.

Arrears and void loss figures remain stable, although still affected by coronavirus restrictions and associated increase in unemployment. Rent collection rates continue to be consistent with normal seasonal trends, and underlying cashflow performance remains strong.

Forecasts for the next 12 months indicate that performance and plans are continuing to return towards levels seen before the coronavirus pandemic, however this could be impacted if the Government is forced to delay elements of its roadmap.

Will Perry, Director of Strategy at RSH, said:

The social housing sector continues to show financial strength and forecasts increased spend on maintenance and investment over the next twelve months.

The continuing challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic reinforce the need for providers to manage risk effectively and ensure they can both maintain services to tenants and plan and invest for the future.

## Notes to editors

- The quarterly survey provides a regular source of information regarding the financial health of private registered providers, in particular with regard to their liquidity position.
- The quarterly survey returns summarised in the report cover the period from 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020 and the latest report is based on regulatory returns from 214 PRPs and PRP groups who own or manage more than 1,000 homes. The survey Data about income collection, including rent collection, was first collected in 2013.
- The Regulator of Social Housing promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached

and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.

- For press office contact details, see the [Media enquiries page](#). For general queries, please email [enquiries@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsh.gov.uk) or call 0300 124 5225.