

The new social housing regulations: Is your landlord doing a good job?



What questions can tenants ask to help their landlord respond to the new social housing regulations promised in the Social Housing White Paper?

All social housing landlords should be working hard to deliver the promises made in the government's Social Housing White Paper (*The Charter for Social Housing Residents, 2020*). They must comply with new building safety laws and new rules about how they listen to tenants and tell them about whether or not they are performing well.

This checklist was originally drawn up for tenants of council-owned homes managed by an ALMO, but the questions are also relevant for council and housing association tenants. They highlight the key elements of good practice for any regulated landlord who aims to do the job well. Tenants – who now have a guarantee from government that their voices will be heard – can use these questions to shape constructive discussions with their landlords.

Core question	General questions	More detailed questions
What is the culture of your landlord?	Do staff respect and listen to all tenants? Do all tenants feel heard? Are all tenants able to raise concerns, make suggestions and complaints? Do you feel your landlord recognises the diversity among the communities where they work; and that they don't make assumptions about what their tenants want or need?	How do we know? Does your experience of your landlord match the conversations you have with other tenants? Does your landlord check whether it gets all the feedback it should have? Do some tenants feel they can't complain or give feedback? If so, what are landlords doing about this? What exact steps does your landlord take to make sure its work and culture is inclusive and representative?



Headline	General questions	More detailed information
Do the views of tenants shape your landlord's services?	Does your landlord support and encourage independent tenant scrutiny of its work? How does your landlord use tenant feedback to make decisions about services? And how do they tell you about this? Does your landlord let tenants know when or if they act on or reject feedback, and the reasons why? Do tenants feel that their involvement is worthwhile? Are tenant engagement structures properly funded? Is training offered for tenants? Can you choose how much or how little you want to be involved?	How does your landlord show its work and services are improving? What is the evidence for how tenant feedback has shaped services? How is this measured? What does your landlord do with the information? For instance, is it shared with ALMO or housing association boards or local authority councillors? What do other similar-sized ALMOs or HAs/councils do?
How does your landlord handle complaints?	Has your landlord published the mandatory self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code on their website? If a tenant wants to make a complaint, can they find out how to do this – and do it – quickly? Does the landlord check with tenants how well its complaints policy and service works? What is your landlord's performance on complaints?	If yes, is it easy to find? What areas of improvement did it identify? What is your landlord doing about them? How easy is it to find out how to complain? Is it easy to make a complaint whether or not you have internet access, for instance? How? Do they make a difference? How does your landlord learn from complaints? Is performance reported? If so, is it easy for tenants to read and give feedback on?
Does your landlord meet Consumer Standards, the principles of the Social Housing White Paper and other legislation?	Has your landlord completed a review against the current Consumer Standards? Has your landlord reviewed itself against the Social Housing White Paper and other legislation?	If so, is there an improvement plan? Did you landlord ask how tenant views shape all the services they offer? Does your landlord have a clear plan to get ready for the new regulatory regime?
Can tenants be confident that their homes are safe?	Have tenant views shaped your landlord's approach to building safety? Is there a tenant engagement strategy for any high-risk buildings your landlord manages? Do tenants know how to raise safety concerns? And are they confident they will be resolved quickly?	How? Is it working and how is it reviewed and updated regularly? What is the evidence for this?

This checklist has been adapted from *Excellence in Partnership and Management* (updated 2022), published by the National Federation of ALMOs and the Councils with ALMOs Group.

For more useful information about how landlord should do their work, see:

Housing Ombudsman: housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Regulator of Social Housing: gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing

Tpas – Tenant engagement experts: tpas.org.uk

The Taroe Trust - campaigning for tenants in the regulated housing sector: taroe.org.uk

The National Federation of ALMOs: almos.org.uk

